Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Estern Iconography

Klingbeil, Martin

Abstract: Based on a comprehensive survey of metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter, a total number of 507 occurrences are identified in which God is described by means of a metaphor. Applying modern metaphor theory, these occurrences are classified according to their main metaphor, submetaphor, metaphor type, and metaphor category. It is shown, that a proportionally small number of 17 main metaphor groups with their respective submetaphors exist which describe Yahweh in mostly anthropomorphic categories. Focusing on the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, a group of eight psalms is selected which display a recurrence of the two metaphors: Psa 18, 21, 29, 46, 65, 68, 83, and 144. Each psalm is discussed according to its transmitted text, semantic peculiarities, and literary structures, followed by short comments on the passage. It appears that the authors of the psalms under consideration used imagery familiar to them from their Syro-Palestinian background, but adapted and shaped it accordingly to their literary. Intentions in the form of an interpretatio Israelitica. The notion of Yahweh fighting as a warrior from heaven on behalf of his people encompasses the spectrum of meaning for the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in the most comprehensive way. In the iconographic part of the study, the visual sources are presented in three groups, i.e., depictions of gods or goddesses displaying warrior attributes, those with god of heaven attributes, and a group manifesting attributes which are reflective both imageries. A total number of 93 images are presented of which approximately one-third come from Syro-Palestinian archaeological sites. It is noted that the more aggressive depictions of gods. Can generally be associated with earlier time periods and are well represented in Syro-Palestine. As the most prolific source for iconographic images reflecting the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, the Neo-Assyrian glyptic of the 9th-7th centuries can be established. In comparing the two bodies of evidence, it appears that the biblical authors employed metaphors reflecting motifs from ANE iconography, although it is not possible to speak of a one-to-one relationship. Rather, the reutilization and adaptation of the imagery and its ascription to Yahweh demonstrates the tendency to indicate the superiority of Yahweh over the deities of the ANE in a strong monotheistic fashion.

Martin Klingbeil

Yahweh Fighting from Heaven

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The author

Martin Klingbeil was born in Berlin on 21.01.1966. He studied Theology at the Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, Austria, and Helderberg College, South Africa (1986–1989). He completed a M.A. in Semitic Languages (1992) and a D.Litt. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies (1995) at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. He has done research at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and is currently lecturing Biblical Languages and Old Testament subjects at the Universidad Adventista de Bolivia in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

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Although written by one author, a dissertation is never the product of an individual effort, but rather the result of a variety of influences and personalities who contributed in a direct or indirect way to the present study in its final stage (for which the author, of course, takes the ultimate responsibility). Therefore, I would like to single out a number of people to whom I would like to express my appreciation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew psalter still remains one of the most popular books in the Old Testament, since it represents a chronological cross-section of Hebrew religious thought without concentrating exclusively on either narrative, sapiential, or prophetic objectives. Although it has always been taken for granted that this collection of poems and hymns is rich in metaphorical language, very little has been done in the line of applying modern metaphor theory to the text of the Hebrew Bible: "Few commentators or readers of the Psalms can doubt the importance of metaphor in either the psalter itself or in religious language generally, but very few, so it seems, actually write on the subject" (Croft, 1987:53). Commonly the procedure is followed to identify the meaning of metaphors from the perspective of extra-biblical comparative material without first trying to establish the meaning of a specific metaphor within the biblical frame of reference. Although this certainly is a legitimate approach, and forms a significant part of the following study, it cannot replace the deciphering of a biblical metaphor within its own Israelite identification and dynamic cultural context (Brettler, 1993:135f.), taking the results of modern metaphor research into consideration.[1]

The metaphor of God as warrior has repeatedly invited the attention of the academic community, but predominantly from the perspective of Israelite vs. ancient Near Eastern warfare.[2] The attention normally focuses on issues such as Yahweh's intervention in Israelite warfare, the notion of 'holy war', the various periods and stages of Israelite warfare, the theological implications of the motif, etc. The significance of the metaphor of Yahweh as warrior has been neglected to a certain extent. As a positive step in the right direction, Brettler's article (1993) about the metaphor of Yahweh as warrior in the Hebrew psalter should be noted.[3] However, in a preliminary

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1 An important recent survey on the *status quo* of metaphor research and its relationship to the biblical text, is found in Macky (1990).

2 Pertaining to the theme of the divine warrior and Israelite warfare, cf. von Rad (1951), Miller (1973), Lind (1980), Weinfeld (1986), and more recently, the study by Kang (1989). The last author tries to "investigate the motifs of divine war in the ancient Near East and in this light to research the motifs of war in the Old Testament" (1989:1).

3 Brettler's article in which he discusses four psalms (3, 46, 83, 144) has at least in part provided a certain impetus for the present study, since he endeavours to establish the meaning of the metaphor of Yahweh as warrior within the ancient Israelite religious matrix. He takes modern metaphor theory into consideration which indicates "that a

survey of metaphors in the Hebrew psalter we established the affinity between the warrior metaphor and the God of heaven metaphor to the extent that one may actually speak of one metaphor with two facets. Therefore, the focus of the research is on both the warrior and God of heaven imagery.

Beyond the understanding of the metaphors of Yahweh as warrior and as God of heaven against their biblical background, the relationship between biblical metaphor and ANE iconography, viz., the study of visual material from the ANE, offers itself as an avenue for comparative research, since one aspect of a metaphor is its function as a literary image.[4] ANE iconography has claimed a secure stand within the realm of Biblical Studies over the last two decades, contributing to the study of the religious history of the ANE. The publications coming forth from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, have made a significant contribution in this field.[5] While the imagery of the Hebrew psalter and its relationship with ANE iconography has been the subject of the popular *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament. Am Beispiel der Psalmen* by Keel (1972),[6] a discussion of the motif of Yahweh as God of heaven and warrior in the psalms, set in comparison with images from ANE iconography depicting motifs of deities with similar connotations, has thus far not been undertaken.

1.1. TERMINOLOGY

With regard to the terminology employed in this discussion, the following observations are valid:

Yahweh as warrior refers to motifs that are ascribed to God in the Hebrew psalter bearing warlike connotations. The presence in the biblical texts of descriptions of hostile activities, implements of warfare, semantic domains

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metaphor acts as a storehouse of associated commonplaces between the vehicle and the tenor, any of which may be evoked in particular contexts" (1993:137). While we will discuss metaphor theory at some length below, this statement demonstrates the metaphorical approach to the warrior motif.

4 Cf. e.g. Keel's study on the metaphoric language of the *Songs of Solomon* (1984).

5 The recent attempt of Keel and Uehlinger (1992) to iconographically trace the development of Canaanite/Israelite religious symbolism from the Middle Bronze age to the end of the Persian period has already become a standard work.

6 Now in its 5th German edition.

of warfare,[7] etc., are indicative of the utilization of the metaphor of God as warrior. Most of these images are anthropomorphically oriented, but as Brettler correctly observes, go beyond mere projections of human warrior attributes onto Yahweh: "The many similarities between human warriors and YHWH as warrior in conjunction with the substantial differences between them make it appropriate to speak of 'YHWH is a warrior' as a metaphor" (1993:137).

Yahweh as God of heaven[8] is a more generic and somewhat ambiguous term which has been chosen. It is used in a general sense in order to accommodate the various aspects of the motif of a heavenly God involved in warfare. Thus the terminology will encompass descriptions of Yahweh with cosmic or celestial connotations such as activities or attributes designating him as weather-god, sun-god, storm-god, bringer of rain and fertility, etc. To isolate one of these aspects as the main communicator of the imagery would have limited the scope considerably, and only the terminology of Yahweh as God of heaven appeared expandable enough to accommodate the various cosmic contexts in which the warrior metaphor occurs. It is the notion of Yahweh fighting as a warrior from heaven which epitomizes the affinity of the metaphors and their spectrum of meaning in the most concise way.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The study will analyze the metaphors of God as warrior and god of heaven in the Hebrew Psalter exegetically, and then compare them against the background of pictorial sources from the ANE. In a more detailed manner, the objectives of the present study can be summarized as follows:

(1) To discuss the methodological issues associated with the various aspects of the research, including the following: the current state of metaphor research in the realm of biblical metaphors and the formulation of a metaphor theory relevant for the present discussion; a short introduction to the problem issues concerning the study of the Hebrew psalter and the choice of an exegetical approach to the biblical texts selected for this study;

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7 In dealing with metaphorical language, it has to be noted that the identification of the metaphors lies on a concept level, and cannot be restricted to expressions and divine epithets like גבור 'warrior' or איש מלחמה 'man of war' (Brettler, 1993:138).

8 With regard to the spelling of 'God' throughout the study we have attempted to keep in line with traditional English spelling practices. In reference to the God of the biblical texts, we use capitalization, while 'god' as a designation of other deities or as a generic term will not be capitalized.

an introduction to the realm of iconographic studies and their relationship to the biblical texts; a brief discussion of the comparative approach and its ramifications.
(2) To identify and select a number of texts from the Hebrew psalter which represent the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, and to attempt an understanding of the metaphors from an exegetical perspective.
(3) To collect and describe iconographic images of goddesses, gods, or divine symbols from the ANE, displaying attributes which can be associated with the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.
(4) To compare the biblical texts with the iconographic images with regard to similarities and contrasts, and to draw possible conclusions from such a comparison.

2. METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

In view of the ever-increasing complexity of readily available information and data, the emphasis in biblical scholarship has taken a distinct turn during the last 30 years. While the 1950s and 60s were characterized by a synthetical approach to the field of biblical studies, including sweeping historical reconstructions and the sometimes astonishing integration of a variety of data into an overall picture, we nowadays are faced with discussions about methods, axioms, and criteria. The focus has shifted from far-reaching conclusions to the way by which one arrives at certain, cautiously qualified, deductions (Herion, 1992:xxxvii). In the age of paradigm shifts, epistemological questions become fundamental issues. The biblical scholar of the nineties is a highly skilled specialist with a limited and clearly defined area of expertise.[1] Scholarly almanacs in the size of a William F. Albright, whose scientific contributions comprised a vast variety of disciplines, are a disappearing species.[2]However, the pendulum movement, which so often characterizes the progress of scientific thought, also applies to the field of biblical studies. While former generations of biblical scholars sometimes arrived at far-reaching conclusions that were acceptable to a majority of scholars,[3] we nowadays are faced with the realization that "scholarly consensus simply does not exist here at the end of the twentieth century" (Herion, 1992:xxxvii). However, this

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1 This development which has been at times lamented as "overspecialization", is reflected in the development of the recently published *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Says Herion in his introductory remarks: "One will also appreciate the extent to which biblical studies has [sic] become increasingly specialized and even fragmented during the past thirty years. This first became apparent to us during the assignment phase of the project, as more and more contributors expressed reservations about taking on assignments that did not lie within the immediate bounds of their particular 'subject' or area of expertise. On the positive side, this means that most *ABD* entries devote greater attention to crucial matters of data methodology, so that the reader usually gets an expert presentation of the basic issues associated with the study of this or that topic. However, ... the drawback is a certain reluctance to place a given topic within a larger picture - to provide the sweeping and definitive synthesis that some readers desire and expect in a dictionary of the Bible" (1992:xxxviii).

2 It is interesting to note that "in 1962 only 253 contributors were needed to write more than 7,500 entries for the *IDB*, while thirty years later almost four times as many were needed to write 6,200 entries for the *ABD*" (Herion, 1992:xxxix).

3 This is, of course, an over-simplification of the matter, but the intent is to illustrate the extreme sides of the pendulum movement in the development of biblical scholarship.

phenomenon sometimes tends to leave the biblical student in the peculiar situation of finding himself, though sufficiently supplied with "the facts", without assistance to integrate these facts into a meaningful greater picture.
From the preceding remarks, it stands without question that a significant part will be devoted to methodological issues. Nevertheless, it seems important also to critically point out the possible pitfalls of the recent emphasis on methodology. Thus, some remarks to methodology.
(1) Methodology in itself is not a safeguard against 'sweeping syntheses'. Often, even the methodology applied reflects the convictions of the individual scholar. If a methodology is only adduced to serve as proof for the personal opinion of the author, then the soundness of the methodology seems to be questionable.[4]
(2) A balanced approach to the relationship between methodology and synthesis appears to be essential. That would refer to the three important stages of a research project: a) the development of a sound methodology with consideration of all relevant factors; b) the consistent application of that methodology, and c) the cautious integration of the research results into a meaningful whole.
The concept of the present study endeavors to follow these guidelines, while the relevant issues concern the following areas: a) concept and theory of biblical metaphor; b) exegesis of the Hebrew psalter; c) iconographic studies and their relevance for biblical studies; and d) comparative method. However, unlike other studies we shall limit our methodological considerations in this chapter to a description of the research procedure and the limitations of the project. We shall deviate from the common practice of presenting the methodological considerations in the form of a sometimes overwhelming section preceding the entire discussion, which often appears to be somewhat disconnected from the actual application of the methodology. Thus, at the beginning of each chapter a manageable section concerned with the methodological issues relevant for the respective chapter is included. In that way it is endeavoured to make the study more reader-friendly.

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[4] Obviously, the scholar does not start his work with a *tabula rasa* in his mind. Nevertheless, he has to be aware of his own preconceptions, and be able to adjust his opinion to the research results.

2.1. PROCEDURE

The general procedure will be outlined in the following. The research is proceding from a general survey of metaphors in the Hebrew psalter toward the specific texts and iconographic images relevant for the discussion.

2.1.1. Survey of Metaphors of God in the Psalms

In order to isolate the metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter, the results of a general survey of the texts will be presented. This list of texts/passages will be organized in categories of main metaphors with their respective associated submetaphors.[5] As an organizing criteria we will adapt Brettler's concept of main metaphors and submetaphors. Furthermore, Korpel's semantic classes will be adapted to the need of the present study (cf. below under 3.1.).

2.1.2. Internal-Exegetical Analysis

After having thus gained a profile[6] of the metaphorical language about God employed in the psalms, we will select one metaphor[7] with its various submetaphors, and analyze it according to its inner-biblical meaning. We follow with this procedure the valid claims made by Talmon (1977) which will be discussed below in the introduction to chapter 6.[8] The questions involved in the exegetical process are the ones of classical exegesis: text, translation, historical and literary context, form, structure, grammar, lexical analysis, biblical context, etc. (Stuart, 1992:682-688; Deist and Burden, 1980; cf. also below in the introduction to chapter 4).

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5 The identification of an associated submetaphor will be discussed below (cf. Brettler, 1989:21; Soskice, 1985:73).

6 To the best knowledge of the present writer, a survey like this has not been conducted yet. It stands without question that the probability of missing an individual metaphor is not to be excluded, taking into consideration the amount of material and the limitations of metaphorical identification. Therefore, one has to keep in mind the outline-character of this procedure.

7 The criteria for the selection are not fixed, and are determined by the value of the metaphor for the rest of the study. The God of heaven and warrior metaphors, in this case, are understood as two facets of the same metaphor.

8 Talmon demonstrated "the need for a definition of the proper procedure to be followed in the comparative philological study of biblical texts and to adduce proof for the maxim that the inner-biblical analysis always should precede the comparison with extra-biblical texts" (1977:347).

2.1.3. External-Iconographic Analysis

Iconographic research has contributed an increasing amount of valuable insights for biblical studies obtained through the understanding of motifs found on extra-biblical artifacts. The ratio between extra-biblical literary sources and non-literary sources is far toward the advantage of the iconographic side (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:10-12). Iconography has indeed become a discipline of biblical scholarship in its own right, furthered especially by O. Keel and his students at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.[9] The subject of this study, i.e., metaphors of God, lend themselves readily to comparisons with extra-biblical iconographic sources. Therefore, iconographic sources from the ANE,[10] originating within the given chronological and geographical limitations of this study, qualify as comparative material for the study of metaphors of God.[11] These objects will be assembled and presented in the form of a descriptive catalogue.

2.1.4. Comparison

After having analyzed the biblical texts and the iconographic objects in their own right, both bodies of evidence will be compared with each other with regard to similarities and contrasts between the literary and iconographic imagery employed.

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[9] Cf. the recent publication by Keel and Uehlinger (1992) in which the authors have analyzed iconographic sources and their contribution toward the religious history of Canaan and Israel.

[10] Especially depictions on miniature art such as cylinder or stamp seals (*Flachbilder*), i.e., two-dimensional representations, in contrast to figurines, can communicate a thematic context (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:13f.).

[11] As for the external-iconographic category of comparison, the approach to the comparative material will be representative, and not comprehensive.

3. METAPHORS OF GOD IN THE PSALMS

This chapter will incorporate an introduction to the theoretical framework of biblical metaphor, followed by a survey of metaphors of God in the book of psalms. A statistical evaluation of the material will conclude this section.

3.1. BIBLICAL METAPHOR

Theories of metaphor have been abundant, and since the time of Aristotle the discussion of the use of metaphor in language has become a pre-eminent topic for philosophical and scholarly discourses.[1] It is not the intention of the present study to trace the concept of metaphor to its Greek philosophical roots, but rather to provide a short survey of literature pertaining to the present state of the issue, especially with regard to the language of the Bible.[2] This will be followed by a discussion of relevant aspects regarding the use of metaphor in biblical language.

3.1.1. Review of Literature

The last three decades have brought an increasing number of publications dealing with the subject of metaphor in a general sense and, in a more specific way, with biblical metaphor (Macky, 1990:1).[3] The main

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1 Traditionally Aristotle has been credited with the first comprehensive discussion of metaphor; the focus of his ideas were on the nature of language. The primary source for his discourse on metaphor is found in the first sentence of chapter 21 of the *Poetics*: "A 'metaphorical term' involves the transferred use of a term that properly belongs to something else; the transference can be from genus to species, from species to genus, from species to species, or analogical" (Aristotle *apud* Soskice, 1985:4). It has to be understood, however, that Aristotle's treatment of metaphor was pragmatically oriented; he did not intend to convey "a rigorous description of linguistic practice but to describe metaphor in order to help the poet to achieve excellence in style" (Soskice, 1985:9).

2 Macky, in his valuable study on *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought* points out a general absence of literature in this area: "We have works on metaphor in general, in religion, and in Christian theology, but none on metaphor in the Bible" (1990:8).

3 The dichotomy between religious metaphorical language on one side being charged with imprecision and emotionality, and scientific language on the other presented as the epitome of objectivity and factuality, has to be abandoned right from the beginning. Soskice devotes a chapter to the question of the relationship between religious and scientific language with respect to the use of metaphors: "In science, social science, ethics, theology, indeed the whole realm of abstract theorizing, it is the paramorphic

contributions have come from the field of general linguistics, these concepts having only recently been applied to biblical studies.[4] I. A. Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936), in which he differentiates between the subject – the tenor, and the symbol – the vehicle, of a metaphor, can be taken as a point of departure. This concept is taken up by M. Black in *Models and Metaphors* (1962) in which he introduces his theory about the subject, describing it as the interaction-view of metaphor[5] (1962:38). He acknowledges the importance of the literary context for the understanding of a metaphor, transferring the discussion to the sphere of semantics. Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977) claims that metaphors can only be defined metaphorically, thus creating a paradox (cf. Korpel, 1990:47). G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, in *Metaphors we live by* (1980), contribute some new impetus in claiming that almost all language is metaphorical (1980:3). Earl R. MacCormac, in *A Cognitive Theory of Metaphor* (1985), describes metaphor as resulting from a cognitive process, while his emphasis lies also in the realm of semantics, especially semantic associations as determinants for the meaning of a metaphor.[6] Furthermore, he suggests that "all theories about the way metaphorical thinking works must themselves be metaphorical" (Macky, 1990:7).

Shifting the focus of the discussion to the field of biblical studies, G. B. Caird devotes one chapter in *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (1980) to the use of metaphor in the Bible. However, his point of convergence is very narrow, and besides stating his hypothesis that "all, or almost all, of the language used by the Bible to refer to God is metaphor" (1980:18), he unfortunately does not discuss the theoretical assumptions and implications of such a position.

Much of the impetus for the discussion of biblical metaphor has originated in NT studies, and it is interesting to note that "in the field of biblical exegesis, interpreters of the gospel parables have been foremost in exploiting this radical re-estimate of the importance of metaphor" (Porter,

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models [i.e., models where the source and the subject differ, as in a metaphor] which are used in attempts to speak about the 'mysterious overplus'" (1985:103; cf. also Brettler, 1989:17).

4 This survey of literature is not meant to be exhaustive, since it is not objective of the present study to re-write the development of the debate centering around the use of metaphorical language.

5 The different theories of metaphor, viz., biblical metaphor, will concern us below.

6 Says MacCormac: "The meaning of metaphors results from the semantical aspects of communication, the context in cultural settings, and the creation of new concepts. Like the determination of meaning in ordinary language, metaphorical meaning arises from various dimensions of metaphor - communication, culture, and cognition" (1985:227).

1983:x). Only during recent years have scholars turned their attention to the use of specific metaphors in the Old Testament.[7] J. M. Soskice, in *Metaphor and Religious Language* (1985), formulated an important approach which can be referred to as a critical realist view of religious metaphors (Macky, 1990:7), stressing the importance of experience in the development of metaphor.[8]

The mention of a number of recent studies will conclude this brief survey of literature about metaphor and its usage in biblical language. *God is King* (1989) by M. Z. Brettler addresses the metaphor of divine kingship. Taking a moderate approach,[9] his main contribution may be found in the notion that metaphors have associated submetaphors (cf. Soskice, 1985:73) which indicate that the metaphor of God as King is alive and not dead (Brettler, 1989:21-23). Brettler has continued to systematically trace the development of metaphorical thought in the Od Testament in an article on the warrior metaphor in the Psalms (1993) which comes closest to the scope of the present study.[10] In a recent study (1998), Brettler has shifted his focus to prophetic literature, demonstrating a variety of at times conflicting metaphors in Isa 40-66 that serve to create a complementary image of God stressing his incomparability.[11] Another important contribution of Brettler is the idea that metaphors of God do not necessarily have to be logically interrelated, but can at times complement or even criticize each other, though without mutually annihilation (1998:102f.).

P. W. Macky, in *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought* (1990), has made the question of biblical metaphor the subject of a whole monograph.[12] The value of that study lies in the consequent application of

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7 E.g. Porter (1983) in a study on Daniel 7 and 8, and Keel (1984) on metaphor in the Song of Solomon.

8 Says Korpel in summarizing the main ideas of Soskice: "She states that in science as well as religion, experience is at the root of all knowledge. Although the individual experience remains vital, it is the collective experience as codified in an established tradition of interpretation by a particular community of interest that is decisive. To understand a religious metaphor one has to stand in that particular context and tradition" (1990:25f.).

9 Says Brettler: "I agree with Black, Ricoeur and others, that metaphor must be studied within both semantics and pragmatics..." (1989:20). See also below.

10 Cf. our remarks in the introduction. See also his contribution to a project at the University of Duisburg (Brettler, 1997) that tries to metaphorically map God in the Hebrew Bible.

11 "I would suggest that these divine similes and metaphors which are central to Isaiah 40-66 are used to suggest YHWH's fundamental likeness to humans while still fostering YHWH's incomparability" (Brettler, 1998:98).

12 Macky reviews the developments up to the publication of his study (chapter 1), followed by a definition of metaphor (chapter 2) which is in accordance with Soskice [see below

theoretical considerations about metaphor to the biblical text. His approach to the subject, which he labels critical metaphoricalism, seems to be balanced, avoiding the pitfalls of the more extreme positions.[13]

M. C. A. Korpel's *A Rift in the Clouds. Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (1990) has made an important contribution to the question of biblical metaphor from the perspective of Ugaritic literature. In content and character this work comes closest to the scope of the present study.[14] The value of this work is significant, since it provides a wealth of information about the extra-biblical background of metaphors relating to God employed by the biblical authors, and it can almost be used as a reference work. Korpel, like Macky, also seems to take an intermediate approach to the theory of metaphor (Korpel, 1990:77).

To conclude this section, a statement of Brettler may be taken as representative for the present trend of thought in studies dealing with biblical metaphor.

> Theorists of metaphor may be divided into three camps: those who posit that metaphor is determined by semantics,[15] the study of words; those who define metaphor through pragmatics,[16] the study of utterances; and those who take an intermediate position, that metaphor belongs to both disciplines. A scholarly consensus is slowly being reached that the third, compromise position is correct (1989:19)

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under 3.2.2.]. He then describes the various types of biblical metaphor (chapter 3), proposing a metaphorical model for biblical metaphor (chapter 4). After having addressed the issue of retired metaphors (chapter 5), he turns to the discussion of the most prominent theories of metaphor (chapter 6 and 7). Next he turns to the question of what language the biblical writers employed for God (chapter 8), after which he discusses the purpose and necessity of metaphorical usage in the Bible (chapter 7-10). The concluding chapter of the book tries to communicate imaginatively to the reader the experience of a biblical writing in his application of a metaphor.

13 See below under 3.2.2.

14 In order to avoid being repetitious we will present the summary of Korpel's book as provided by Niehr in a book review: "In einem einleitenden Kapitel arbeitet die Verfasserin die Problemstellung ihrer Arbeit anhand von Theologen des Mittelalters bis zur Moderne heraus.... Anschließend wendet sie sich der Analyse von Metapher und Ähnlichkeit zu.... In Kap. 3 wird eine Fülle von anthropomorphen Metaphern in der Beschreibung des Göttlichen in Ugarit und Israel untersucht. ... Kapitel 4 stellt die theriomorphen ... Beschreibungen des Göttlichen dar. Die Arbeit wird beschlossen durch Schlußfolgerungen..." (1992:461f.).

15 E.g. A. J. Bjørndalen in his *Untersuchung zur allegorischen Rede der Propheten Amos und Jesaja* (1986) follows A. J. B. N. Reichling's *Verzamelde studies over hedendaagse problemen der taalwetenschap* (1966): "Die Metapher wird von A. Reichling im Rahmen einer allgemeinen Theorie der Wortbedeutung beschrieben" (Bjørndalen, 1986:39).

16 As a representative of this group, J. Searle may be taken: "Metaphorical meaning is always speaker's utterance meaning" (1979:93).

3.1.2. Theories of Biblical Metaphor

The foregoing brief survey of the literature about metaphor in general and biblical metaphor in particular has made it apparent that the classical definition of metaphor does not suffice for the purpose of the present study. Before we turn our attention to the various theories of biblical metaphor, it seems appropriate, therefore, to find a working definition of metaphor.
Metaphor belongs to the category of figurative language[17] and the attempts to define such an universal linguistic phenomenon are almost as numerous as the authors who address the question.[18] A definition of metaphor must include both semantics and pragmatics, recognizing the fact that the nature of metaphor depends largely on the "verbal cotext and situational context" (Korpel, 1990:77). Furthermore, metaphor should be defined as a cognitive act initialized by a figure of speech. Macky's definition of metaphor appears to include all the above-mentioned aspects:

> *Metaphor is that figurative way of speaking (and meaning) in which one reality, the Subject, is depicted in terms that are more commonly associated with a different reality, the Symbol, which is related to it by Analogy* [his italics] (1990:49).[19]

In order to avoid the somewhat ambiguous term symbol, one could replace it with representation which points to the reality standing behind it and the cognitive process which is involved in the recognition of the metaphor. Thus a working definition of biblical metaphor for the purpose of this study could be formulated as follows:
Metaphor is a deliberate form of figurative speech that works on both word and sentence level. Metaphor as an act of speech leads to a cognitive act aided by associative commonplaces which is evoked by the incongruence[20]

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[17] Trying to define the fine line between literal and figurative language, Macky comes to the following conclusion: "Therefore the major distinction we offer is that *literal usage is (communicable) independent usage* and *figurative usage is dependent usage* [his italics]" (1990:42). Figurative language according to this definition is dependent on another point of reference than the immediate reality to which literal language can be applied. However, it is important to acknowledge the complex and sometimes subjective character of the differentiation between literal and figurative language use. Comments Nielsen: "And, finally, it should be stressed that, since it is very largely a matter of opinion whether a specific expression is perceived as imagery or literal language, it is important to investigate how the expression relates to any literal language in the associated literary context" (1989:67).

[18] For a summary of the most significant definitions, see Macky (1990:44-49).

[19] Macky defines symbol and analogy as follows: "Analogy: a relationship between two realities in which there are significant similarities and noticeable differences. ... Symbol: a reality (an object, quality, process, state of affairs or image) that stands for and gives insight into some other reality because of the analogy between the two" (1990:56).

[20] With incongruence we refer to the fact that there are biblical metaphors which are false when taken literally - which is the normal case - but that there are also metaphors which

between the way a reality is depicted (i.e., the representation) and the customary depiction of that reality (i.e., the subject).[21]
A short comment is appropriate at this juncture about the relationship between metaphor and imagery. It is interesting to note that both terms are often used interchangeably and tend to be conflated (Nielsen, 1989:61f.). For this study we understand imagery as a category broader than metaphor, including other categories of figurative language, e.g., comparison, parables and allegories.[22] Metaphor could therefore be viewed as a category of imagery.

3.1.2.1. Substitution Theory of Metaphor

This theory comes closest to the original definition of metaphor postulated by Aristotle and has been reiterated repeatedly, finding its way into studies on metaphor which have originated in the twentieth century. The substitution theory of metaphor, which can also be designated as absolute literalism, is based on the assumption that a metaphor which has any cognitive meaning can adequately or more precisely be re-expressed in literal speech. Therefore, the metaphor functions only as a substitution for a literal expression (Macky, 1990:139). One has to realize the theoretical paradigm of the nature of human speech which constitutes the framework for this theory: the post-enlightenment era emphasized a theory of the human conceptional system which "elevates literal speech as the norm of thought and depreciates metaphor as a stylistic deviation from good usage" (Macky, 1990:139).
The weaknesses of the substitution theory of metaphor become especially apparent if one applies them to the realm of biblical metaphor. Scholars have pointed out repeatedly that religious language, and especially language about God, is intrinsically metaphorical.[23] It follows that there are

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are true when expressed literally, e.g., the metaphorical simile. There is, however, in most cases an incongruency between the subject reality and the representation reality which indicates a metaphorical speech of act. Semantic pointers such as "like" or "as" are often part of the metaphorical speech act.

21 To use Black's, respectively Richards' language: representation would refer to the vehicle, and subject to the tenor.

22 The two latter categories are more prevalent in the literature of the NT. Nielsen argues, however, that metaphor and imagery are indeed referring to the same phenomenon, combining all categories of figurative speech under the term imagery. Her definition of metaphor, that "The *metaphor* [her italics] consists of two statements that interact with one another by reason of their mutual dissimilarity" (1989:61), seems too broad and not relevant for the present study.

23 This will especially concern us later when we will discuss the metaphorical nature of the way the biblical authors talked about God.

biblical metaphors which cannot be 'resolved' adequately by literal speech, and which have essentially shaped our theological thinking in their function as metaphors, even though their metaphorical character is hidden at times.[24] The substitution theory of metaphor underestimates the significance of the metaphor in the shaping of human thought and language. Macky comes to the conclusion that:

> ... Absolute Literalism [i.e., the substitution theory of metaphor] is too simple. We are *not* able to take all our metaphors and re-express them in literal speech. We *are* [his italics] almost always able to re-express novel metaphors in more standard speech. But that standard speech is often composed of hidden metaphors (1990:155f.).

3.1.2.2. Universal Theory of Metaphor[25]

This theory is diametrically opposed to the substitution theory of metaphor and emphasizes the universal metaphorical character of biblical language. The universal theory of metaphor as advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) acknowledges the existence of hidden and unrecognized metaphors in standard language, and asserts that "our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (1980:3).[26]

However, the universal theory of metaphor has gone too far in limiting our conceptual system exclusively to the realm of metaphor. It does not acknowledge the contextual differences of the recipient of a metaphor which will determine whether a metaphor points to a concept or to a literal reality behind it (Macky, 1990:161).

3.1.2.3. Intermediate Theory of Metaphor

This theory advocates a balance between the two preceding views on metaphor, in that it acknowledges the significance of metaphorical speech on the one hand, but on the other supports the notion that "we can say some

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[24] Macky discusses the implications of hidden metaphors, i.e., metaphors that we employ under the assumption that we are using literal language, but which are nevertheless metaphorical in their character (1990:142-162).

[25] We have not found an adequate designation for this theory which can be used in a general sense. Macky calls it "Radicalism" (1990:141) which unfortunately is not very descriptive and somehow seems biased.

[26] Lakoff and Johnson use an interesting metaphor that has shaped our thinking, i.e., the argument is war metaphor. With regard to arguments we talk of defending, losing, attacking, winning, etc., which reveals that this metaphor is conceptual in character: "Even if you have never fought a fistfight in your life, much less a war, but have been arguing from the time you began to talk, you still conceive of arguments, and execute them, according to the *Argument is War* [his italics] metaphor because the metaphor is built into the conceptual system of the culture in which you live" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:64).

things literally about any reality we know directly ..., provided adequate concomitants are available for members of our speech community..." (Macky, 1990:183). The delineating factors for the distinction between metaphor and literal speech are therefore:
(1) Adequate Concomitants;[27]
(2) Situational Context;[28]
(3) Nature of the Subject, i.e., if observable or supersensible (Macky, 1990:183f.);[29]
(4) Interaction between Metaphorical Reality and Represented Reality.
Metaphorical language therefore can be, and sometimes has to be, understood independently of a literal re-expression. Some biblical metaphors will retain their metaphorical character even if they are paraphrased in more abstract language, since they focus on supersensibles which are at times not understandable outside of metaphorical language.
This classification of the theories of metaphor roughly follows Macky's outline which mentions two more theories of metaphor, namely, sophisticated literalism which contends that "all the presentative (often labeled 'cognitive') aspects of metaphorical speech acts can be re-expressed literally, though it may take a long time before is [sic] done successfully" (1990:163f.), and modified radicalism which stresses that "all speech about unobservable realities is and must be metaphorical" (1990:164). However, the three mentioned categories suffice to demonstrate the spectrum of theories of metaphor. The significant characteristics and contributions of metaphor theories like the interaction and contextual theory of metaphor have been included under our intermediate theory of metaphor which comes closest to the focus of the present study.[30]

3.1.3. Characteristics and Types of Biblical Metaphor

Up to now the discussion of metaphor has mostly been along the lines of metaphor in general. However, the headings and sub-headings indicate that the focus should be on biblical metaphor. Nevertheless, it stands to question

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[27] That would refer to the "verbal cotext" or the "set of signs" mentioned by Korpel (1990:77).

[28] Both the user's and the receiver's context are significant factors for the formation of a metaphor (Korpel, 1990:60).

[29] Macky refers to this theory, which he obviously favours, as critical metaphoricalism, alluding to the critical realism theory of models adduced by Soskice (1985).

[30] The intermediate theory of metaphor is a modification of Macky's critical metaphoricalism which has been adapted for the purpose of this study.

if one can rightly draw a line between biblical metaphor and non-biblical metaphor. Emphasizes Korpel: "First of all it has to be observed that there is no basic difference between religious and other metaphors. To speak about the 'arm' of God is just as accurate, or inaccurate, as to speak about a 'black hole' in modern astronomy" (Korpel, 1990:77). She rightly notices that only a few modern studies published from the perspective of biblical scholarship about biblical metaphor have implemented the observations gained in the field of general linguistics and the philosophy of language (1990:32).[31] If one had to search for differences between biblical and non-biblical metaphors, one would come to the conclusion that there is a quantitative difference in metaphors that deal with observables and supersensibles in and outside the Bible. To compare the metaphors about supersensibles, viz., about the Divine, from biblical and extra-biblical perspectives is the task of the present study.

3.1.3.1. General Types of Metaphor

(1) Substitutionary Metaphors: These metaphors reflect the partial validity of the substitutionalist's observation that some metaphors are used to describe an unknown reality through the eyes of a better-known reality by means of a representation. The most prevalent metaphor in the Bible is the one that conceptionalizes the non-physical[32] in terms of the physical, e.g., "The LORD is my light" (Psa 27:1). The connection between subject reality and representation reality is usually a one-way relationship, leading from representation to subject, which means for the above mentioned example that the metaphor of light will probably enhance my understanding about God.

(2) Interactive Metaphors: Interactive metaphors stress the relationship between the subject reality and its representation reality, and are mainly applicable when considering non-physical realities which point to deeper or more mysterious non-physical realities, e.g., "God is love" (1 John 4:8). An interactive metaphor points to a bi-directional relationship between subject reality and representation reality, implying that for both sides of the metaphorical equation a change of meaning will take place. "God is love"

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[31] Among these are: Porter (1983), Bjørndalen (1986), Bourgnot (1987), Brettler (1989), Mettinger (1989), Korpel (1990), and Macky (1990).

[32] The subject of these metaphors is often the supersensible, e.g., "human inner states and processes; social states and processes; the supernatural realm; and the interaction between the supernatural realm and the human realm" (Macky, 1990:59).

will probably change our understanding of the concept of God as well as of our concept of love.[33]

(3) Ornamental Metaphors: This type of metaphor is easily definable in that it is applied for ornamental or aesthetic purposes, and sometimes serves a special rhetoric device. These metaphors can be re-expressed literally and correspond closely to their literal paraphrase. The biblical book of Proverbs often makes use of the form of an ornamental metaphor, e.g., "Buy truth, and do not sell it" could be paraphrased literally as "Seek truth diligently until you find it and then do not forget it" (Macky, 1990:65).

3.1.3.2. Between Living and Dead Metaphors

There is a progression from novel or living metaphors to retired or dead metaphors.[34] It is important to recognize the state of an act of speech in order to determine if it is a hidden or a moribund metaphor, i.e., used in a literal sense. Brettler points to the significant fact that there are also metaphors that have been revived and as an important criterion he suggests that "dead metaphors do not have associated submetaphors" (1989:21), i.e., metaphors that are not identical with the original one, but belong to it via association.[35] This observation brings us to the history of a certain metaphor which is especially of interest for the biblical scholar since he studies metaphors synchronically and diachronically, namely, metaphors which have been used and re-used throughout centuries.[36] This notion in effect overthrows the fine lines drawn between the different types of metaphor so that a substitutionary metaphor may become an interactive one or vice versa (Nielsen, 1989:50). The same principle applies to the road from the

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[33] Sometimes it appears rather difficult to draw the line between a one-directional and a bi-directional metaphor, since it depends largely on the recipient of the metaphor. Macky mentions the metaphor of Psa 23, "The Lord is my shepherd", which may be a bi-directional metaphor for the person who has a limited concept of a shepherd, but for a shepherd with a clear-defined concept of his work it may only be one-directional (1990:63).

[34] Macky mentions five categories in that spectrum: "(1) novel metaphors: unusual, unfamiliar; (2) familiar metaphors: not new, but not standard either; (3) standard metaphors: established uses still recognized as metaphorical, one for which a few standard positive and negative analogies have been agreed; (4) hidden metaphors: established uses that some users have forgotten are metaphorical; (5) retired metaphors: those that have become literal speech for most adult users; generally called 'dead'" (1990:72f.).

[35] Discussing the metaphor of "God is King", he mentions submetaphors like "God is enthroned" and "God's majesty is celebrated" (1989:21).

[36] In contrast to that, the general linguist studies the question of metaphor often from a purely synchronic perspective which sometimes overlooks the development a metaphor undergoes throughout its history.

living to the dead metaphor, including revived metaphors. It therefore seems to be desirable to establish the meaning of a metaphor in accordance with its state, history, and usage, as difficult as it may be at times.

3.1.3.3. Understanding Metaphors

The interpretation of metaphors is always bound to a hermeneutic process and in accordance with that is susceptible to being a false interpretation (Korpel, 1990:62). It therefore is deemed essential to be aware of the hermeneutic processes involved in the process of decoding a metaphor.
The understanding[37] of a metaphor is dependent on various factors which nevertheless can be reduced to two categories, namely, semantics and context. An understanding of the meaning of the constituent semantic elements of the metaphor has to be combined with the investigation of the literary and situational context. A. Bjørndalen, who stresses the semantic aspect of the interpretation of metaphors,[38] nevertheless comes to the understanding "daß Metaphern immer in einem sprachlichen, eventuell auch situativen Kontext wirksam sind" (1986:51).
With these limitations borne in mind, the decoding and interpretation[39] of a metaphor has to be initialized by the attempt to reconstruct a copy of the

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[37] The "Conduit Metaphor", as an explanation for understanding in which meaning is simply transferred via a conduit to the hearer, appears too simplistic and too passive to illustrate the intricacies of understanding the meaning of words, viz., in our case, the understanding of a metaphor. (Macky, 1990:20). A more accurate explanation would be the following: "Language seems rather to help one person to construct out of his own stock of mental stuff something like a replica, or copy, of someone else's thoughts - a replica which can be more or less accurate, depending on many factors" (Reddy, 1979:287). Understanding is therefore also dependent on the receiver's frame of reference. Comments Macky: "Thus, understanding is not simply a passive reception of meaning; nor is it the precise calculation achieved by summing up the meanings of each word. Rather, understanding is a task for the imagination, guided by the store of standard word uses, standard sentence structures, and standard ways of meaning which the intellect has catalogued" (1990:20f.).

[38] Bjørndalen demonstrates the difficulties associated with the semantic analysis of metaphors, namely the lack of adequate methods to identify the semantic components of a metaphor with semantic markers. His main contribution to the discussion of metaphor lies in the differentiation between literal and metaphorical speech, i.e., between the conjunctive and disjunctive use of language. Nielsen aptly summarizes his theory: "The main idea of the theory is that a word's meaning consists of different elements, not all of which need to be actualized in the specific language situation. If they are all in action, i.e., all the elements of meaning of which the user of language has knowledge directly and in the specific connexion are of reference to whatever he/she is speaking about, then we are in the presence of *conjunctive use*. But if only some of these elements of meaning are in action it is *disjunctive use*. And it is then this disjunctive use which manifests itself in metaphorical language" (1989:39).

[39] Cf. Nielsen, who has summarized the exegetic consequences of the theoretical considerations about metaphor (1989:66f.).

original speaker's meaning, though not in the sense of substituting the metaphor with literal speech and translating it thus, but rather in a way that tries to re-create the thoughts of the speaker in an imaginative way.

> That can only be done by a combination of imaginative hypothesizing and critical evaluating of the hypotheses. That is essentially the combination that we are proposing here: by our imaginations we attempt to reconstruct the speaker's thinking; then by our critical intellects we judge the adequacy of our reconstructions (Macky, 1990:22).

The decoding and interpretation of metaphor has thus to be controlled by a semantic analysis and the test of viability for the reconstructions of the original meaning of the metaphor. Therefore, this study focuses on the understanding of the metaphors of God used in the book of psalms against their biblical and ancient Near Eastern background which were the essential literary and situational contexts. It is the attempt to find the path back[40] to the intention of the speaker who once used these metaphors to communicate a specific truth about an unobservable reality. By the same token, the limitations of these interpretations have to be ascertained. Since our knowledge of the various contexts remains restricted, there can be no final understanding and interpretation of a metaphor.[41] Only the application of a cautious process[42] of analysis, moving from the semantic analysis through the hierarchy of various contexts, can produce an adequate understanding of a specific metaphor which approximates the meaning intended within its ancient context, although in the final analysis it is always the modern recipient of the metaphor who ascribes a certain meaning to it.

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[40] This expression serves to reiterate the point that each metaphor has its own history, characterized by uses and re-uses, even retired stages (Nielsen, 1989:66f.).

[41] If there is any at all: "Die Metapher erscheint aber in diesem Lichte eher nicht-abschließend-interpretierbar..." (Bjørndalen, 1986:54).

[42] It is interesting to notice the various degrees of vagueness that pertain to the publications about the subject of decoding a metaphor in a correct way. Macky points out that in the process various cognitive activities like "knowing, imagining, speaking, meaning, understanding and explaining" (1990:8) are involved. However, there is no clear definition of how these components work together in the decoding process. Bjørndalen comes to a similar vague conclusion after attempting to find a method for analyzing the semantic components of a metaphor: "Wir bleiben nach diesen Erwägungen dabei, uns auf intuitives Ermitteln besonders relevanter Bedeutungselemente der Metaphern zu beschränken" (1986:59). It seems to lie in the nature of the metaphor to evade the grip of a clearly defined methodology; therefore, the closest approximation to an adequate interpretation must take the various contexts (see above) into consideration before it arrives at any deduction.

3.1.4. Biblical Metaphors of God

The metaphorical character of God-talk has evoked wide interest during the past years, especially from the side of systematic theologians (Korpel, 1990:32),[43] whereas the metaphorical language of God lies at the centre of the discussion for the present study.

3.1.4.1. The Metaphorical Nature of God-Talk

The classical theory of metaphors of God is the notion that "metaphorical language is intrinsic to all God-talk" (Brettler, 1989:17).[44] The underlying theoretical assumptions for this theory can be summarized as follows: (1) the subject of God-talk is a supernatural reality which is infinitely incomprehensible and unimaginable; and (2) the conveying instrument of God-talk is human speech which is intrinsically finite and imperfect, working with concepts limited by chronology and dimension. Therefore, God-talk has to operate under the inhibitions of this apparent paradox, and therefore can only use figurative language, the analogical language of metaphor and symbol, to express it (Macky, 1990:191).

Contrary to this view, it has to be pointed out that the biblical writers employed both literal[45] and figurative speech when they spoke about God, a fact that would dispute the exclusiveness of the theory of the all-metaphorical God-talk. According to Macky, in categorizing the various ways in which the Old Testament writers spoke about God, one can distinguish three classes: (1) when speaking about God negatively, the biblical authors usually employed literal language;[46] (2) in describing the

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[43] Cf. the contributions of contextual theologies which try to re-interpret biblical metaphors of God on the basis of current sociological debates, e.g., black theology or feminist theology. However, these re-interpretations appear to fall short of acknowledging the actual biblical linguistic evidence and have to be understood more along the lines of a type of etymologizing which Barr (1961; 1968) has sufficiently discussed (Korpel, 1990:26-31).

[44] For similar statements cf. Macky (1990:190f.) and Bjørndalen (1986:62).

[45] Macky painstakingly goes into a detailed description of how the biblical writers spoke of God in a literal sense: on the assumption that if one can demonstrate a universally applicable positive/negative pair of concepts he argues that "one or the other concept is literally applicable to everything we can name" (1990:194). Macky adduces two biblical concepts, i.e., the positive/negative pairs real/imaginary and active/wholly passive as applied to God versus the pagan gods. He comes to the conclusion that the biblical writers applied these terms literally to God, and with that he counters the notion that all God-talk is intrinsically metaphorical (1990:192-216).

[46] Examples of this negative God-talk can be seen in Dt 32:4, Job 34:12, Hos 11:8-9, etc. However, in negatively qualifying God there is no specification of how God is, and therefore, a negative description will only produce an imprecise vague indication of subject in question (Macky, 1990:218).

dimension of God's salvation activities, the biblical writers used literal speech;[47] and (3) the rest of the language utilized for the description of God in the Bible is metaphorical in character (1990:217). Although these three classes can be observed, it nevertheless appears that the delineating factors are defined too broadly, not taking into account the fact that our understanding of a text's being a metaphor about God must not necessitate a similar use of language for the original speaker for this act of speech. As Bjørndalen puts it: "Aber man darf keineswegs davon ausgehen, daß Rede, die uns bildhaft erscheint, auch den Israeliten bildhaft, und in derselben Weise bildhaft gewesen ist" (1986:62). He then discusses the metaphorical character of God-talk, referring to texts about Yahweh's inner capacities, his body parts, and his actions, especially in the prophetic literature of the 8th century B.C. (cf. also Kruger, 1988:143-151).[48] Finding evidences that point to both conjunctive and disjunctive uses of language, he concludes:

> Aussagen über Jahwe im Alten Testament müssen keineswegs notwendig metaphorisch im Sinne A. Reichlings gewesen sein, und die im Alten Testament tatsächlich vorkommende Metaphorik über Jahwe ist nicht notwendig speziell in seinem Gottsein begründet, sondern in seiner Zuwendung zu Israel hin und zur Welt, in seinem Bezug auf Israel und die Welt. Jede möglicherweise metaphorische Aussage ist auf ihre eigene semantische Wirkungsweise und auf ihren eigenen semantischen Inhalt hin zu befragen (1986:96).

Again, we are referred to the realm of context from the perspective of semantic analysis, judging each individual occurrence according to its possible metaphorical value within its semantic, literary, and sociological context.[49]

3.1.4.2. Anthropomorphisms and the Metaphors of God

The apparent difficulties in defining the borderlines for biblical metaphors of God might be rooted in the discomfort about the anthropomorphic descriptions of the Divine in the Bible.[50] Korpel has discussed the various

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[47] The dimension of God's saving activities encompasses a variety of semantic fields which can be summarized under the general category of providing benefits. However, the literal use becomes especially apparent within the NT context. Otherwise, these positive activities of God appear to be metaphorical "whenever the author referred or alluded to some physical state or activity that could be the symbol" (Macky, 1990:229).

[48] The discussion of anthropomorphic depictions of God in connection with the question of metaphors will be dealt with shortly.

[49] Louw makes ethnological and sociological categories parts of the semantic analysis and, with that, emphasizes the interrelation of semantics and contextual issues (1992:1080).

[50] With regard to the question of anthropomorphism and metaphor, Brettler turns to the two major biblical theologies of this century, and observes: "Eichrodt (1961:145) sidesteps the whole issue by declaring 'according to the ideas of Jahwism, it cannot be said that Israel regarded God anthropomorphically, but the reverse, that she considered man theophoric'. Von Rad (1962:212...) has a different solution; he discusses

anthropomorphic[51] depictions of God in comparison with similar descriptions of the Divine in Ugarit. She notes that "to imagine God as anthropomorphic was merely a way of speaking" (1990:627). To imagine God in human terms is therefore characteristic of the biblical God-talk, but it does not automatically necessitate the presence of metaphorical language.[52] Again, the general rules, laid down for the distinction between metaphorical and literal speech, have to be applied in order to arrive at an adequate conclusion about a specific anthropomorphism.

Although the purpose of the anthropomorphic metaphors is a description of God's essential qualities, it cannot be defined as the attempt to describe the *spiritualitas dei*,[53] a notion that would merely reflect the substitutionalist's view of metaphor. Rather, it has to be seen in terms of an interactive act of speech that hints at the literally inexplicable realities connected with the character of God. Thus the anthropomorphic metaphors of God cannot be translated or replaced with abstractions of the metaphor, since the metaphor itself enhances our understanding about the characteristics of God.

3.1.4.3. Religious Historical and Literary Historical Aspect

The metaphors of God used in biblical literature, and especially in the book of psalms, are a reflection of the *Gottesvorstellung* and *Gottesbild*[54] the

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anthropomorphism under 'God as spiritual'(!) and notes that biblical anthropomorphisms used are second best to 'Christian faith [which] has been able to accommodate the recognition of God's spiritual nature without prejudice to his immediacy in religion, because it has its focus in the person of Jesus...'" (1989:27f.). J. Jeremias' *Theophanie: die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (1965) shifts the problem to the area of form criticism: he identifies the "Gattung der Theophanieschilderungen" (1965:3) and tries to establish their original form and *Sitz im Leben* (1965:6). For the purpose of the present study, we will make no differentiation between theophanies and other anthropomorphic depictions, i.e., metaphors of God.

[51] Besides the anthropomorphic depictions of God we also find theriomorphic and physiomorphic descriptions. The adjoining discussion of the anthropomorphisms does, therefore, also refer to these categories.

[52] Bjørndalen gives a number of examples from the prophetic books of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah which elucidate the ambiguity of biblical anthropomorphisms, and summarizes: "Solche Rede kann metaphorisch sein, muß es aber nicht sein, und wo sie es ist, ist das nicht notwendig speziell in Gottes Gottsein zu begründen" (1986:93). For him, the determining factor, again, is the conjunctive or disjunctive use of language in the individual text.

[53] Korpel calls the Spirituality of God "nothing but an incomplete theorem of Western theology" (1990:628).

[54] Mettinger distinguishes between the *Gottesvorstellung*, i.e., the mental concept which was thought about God, and the *Gottesbild*, i.e., the way in which the *Gottesvorstellung* was communicated and expressed through texts and iconography (1989:135). Applied to the biblical metaphor of God, it would correspond to the relationship between representation reality and subject reality. However, this distinction seems not always

individual author had: "When the *Gottesbild* is expressed on the level of language it goes without saying that the role of metaphor is of fundamental importance" (Mettinger, 1989:138). The religious historical aspect of the present study, however, has to be understood in a limited way.[55] Whether these metaphors of God are an expression of the official, popular, or personal religious view of God[56] is of secondary importance for the present study, since the focus is not on a reconstruction of the religious history of Israel, but rather on an understanding of an integral segment of Israelite belief, i.e., the concept of God as expressed through the window of

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clear-cut: an anthropomorphic metaphorical depiction of God may not be adduced as being the explicit *Gottesbild* of the author who used it. Therefore, although we acknowledge the differences between the two, we would rather prefer an interactive view of *Gottesvorstellung* and *Gottesbild.*

[55] It does not seem necessary for the scope of this study to reiterate the present state of religious historical research. For a valuable summary of the trends in the discipline of religious historical studies, see P. D. Miller's chapter on Israelite religion in *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters* (1985). A number of more recent studies that contribute to the understanding of Israel's religion, and which reflect the current issues in the debate, are: J. C. de Moor, *The Rise of Yahwism* (1990); H. Niehr, *Der höchste Gott* (1990); R. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit* (1992); and O. Keel and C. Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole* (1992).

[56] R. Albertz (1978) has pointed out the sociological differences between *Großkult* and *Kleinkult*, and distinguishes between official, local, and family religion (1992:43), although one has to emphasize the fact that these categories never existed in a rigid way. To ultimately designate a specific text to one of these categories seems to go beyond the scope of the present study. Therefore, one has to be cautious with regard to general deductions made about the *Gottesbild* or *Gottesvorstellung* of Israel on account of the metaphors presented here, and keep in mind the preliminary character of such statements. Mettinger hints at these complications, noting that the *Gottesbild*, viz., *Gottesbilder* might have been dependent on various factors, such as sociological, theological, chronological, or literary differences (1989:136f.). Iconographic evidence has been suggested as the most possible source for evidence of the personal piety of the people of Israel (Eggler, 1992:32; Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:471). But even here we are confronted with restrictive factors such as the history of a respective motif, the origin of an iconographic artifact, the issue of iconographic interpretation, etc. (cf. Klingbeil, 1992:29-32). However, recently the notion has been expressed to understand the different sociological levels of religion not as mutually exclusive, but as an interactive unity: "Bei aller Berechtigung der Differenzierung von Religionsebenen wird deshalb künftig auch die Durchlässigkeit der verschiedenen Ebenen und ihre *globale Kohärenz* [his italics] innerhalb des jeweiligen religiösen Symbolsystems vermehrt zu bedenken sein" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:472). Miller adduces a further complication involved in the differentiation between various levels of religion: "... one must ask whether it is really possible to mark off a core of personal piety distinguishable from the official cult when many of the verbs and nouns can be and are used in Yahwistic expressions that would be associated with the Yahwism of the sanctuary and the community" (1985:216).

metaphor in the book of psalms.[57] Thus issues of chronology[58] are not of primary importance for this study.[59]

It becomes obvious that the subject of this study, i.e., the metaphor of God in the psalms, is not directly related to the issue of reconstructing Israel's religious history, and that its objective, viz., to understand these metaphors against their biblical and ancient Near Eastern backdrops, is not completely congruent with the goals of the religious history research, although religious historical aspects certainly form an important part of the present discussion. Nevertheless, the contribution of the study may be of some value for the ubiquitous religious historical debate about Monotheism versus Polytheism.[60]

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[57] The psalms do not at all lend themselves easily for religious historical reconstructions, since their composition and compilation is a diverse process, giving very little indication of chronological categories. Ackroyd has convincingly questioned the criteria for a Maccabean dating of some psalms, but nevertheless comes to the conclusion that one should not "create a false impression of reliable dating for Old Testament literature when such dating is at present impossible" (1953:132). It is interesting to note that the article on the book of psalms in the recently published *ABD* leaves out questions of dating altogether. The closest the author of the article comes to an explanation for the origin of the psalms is his statement that the "Psalms originated in the midst of Israel's life..." (Limburg, 1992:524; cf. also Westermann, 1980:12).

[58] It might, however, be possible to demonstrate that one can establish a relative chronology of the texts under discussion, and with that, trace the historical development of a certain metaphor.

[59] This, of course, poses some important questions for the chronological delimitations of the comparative material adduced for this study. It becomes apparent that chronological issues cannot be avoided altogether: the present study does not subscribe to the hypothesis of van Seters (1975) "who places virtually the whole of the OT literature in the exilic and post-exilic eras" (Miller, 1985:213). That there are criteria for determining the antiquity of a text, at least in the case of poetry, has been demonstrated by scholars like Cross and Freedman (1975; see also Freedman, 1980). The result of the application of these criteria to the texts under discussion has to determine the chronological context of the comparative material. Brettler solves the question of chronology in distinguishing "between pre-exilic and post-exilic texts" (1989:24).

[60] It deems not necessary to go into the varied details of this debate. The debate has been at the center of recent religious historical studies (Niehr, 1992:463), and has moved more toward the question of the rise of Yahwism (Niehr, 1990:1; de Moor, 1990:2). There are basically two camps to be distinguished: one group proposes that the origins for the rise of Yahwism can be pushed back into the second millennium B.C. during the Late Bronze Age (de Moor, 1990:261-264; Korpel, 1990). The other emphasizes the first millennium Syro-Canaanite origin of Yahweh (Niehr, 1990). From this perspective, the criticism of Korpel's study *A Rift in the Clouds* (1990), adduced in a book review by Niehr (1992:462f.), becomes obvious. Niehr who opts for an exilic and post-exilic dating of the material, cannot possibly agree to an early origin of Yahwism. However, the positive aspect of these current discussions is that the somewhat neglected perspective of comparative religion has increasingly been implemented in the debate.

Nevertheless, T. Mettinger, in discussing the relationship between *Gottesbild* and metaphor, goes as far as to attempt a definition of the root metaphor[61] for God in the official cult of Judah in pre-exilic times. After identifying the root metaphor of the northern kingdom of Israel as that of the covenant, the author proceeds to demonstrate that the root metaphor of Judah was basileomorphic, i.e., God depicted as king, combining the characteristics of the Canaanite gods El and Ba'al[62] in his personality. Although we acknowledge the importance of the royal metaphor of God,[63] it stands to question if one can really reduce the *Gottesbild* and *Gottesvorstellung* to a single root metaphor, especially since it would involve an accurate dating of this metaphor. Mettinger's root metaphor appears to be a religious historical reconstruction that does not depart from the biblical text, but from a hypothesis, according to which the data is then assembled.[64] To correlate the extra-biblical evidence without qualifications to the biblical text appears methodologically unsound. However, our sources are too limited to make such a far-reaching conclusion of the above-mentioned nature.

It is the endeavor to compare the biblical metaphors of God with extra-biblical literary and iconographic motifs in a methodologically sound way. Therefore, the relevant biblical passages are first presented without resorting to comparative sources before they are set in comparison and contrast with extra-biblical material.

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61 A root metaphor is a basic model or analogy, "used to describe the nature of the world, a way of seeing 'all that is' through a specific key concept" (Mettinger, 1989:138).

62 "El is the enthroned god, Baal the one who acquires his kingship through his conflict with the chaotic forces and who acquires a palace, a temple, as the symbol of his royal status" (Mettinger, 1989:139f.).

63 Brettler in his valuable study of God as king from a metaphorical perspective, comes to the conclusion that this metaphor "is the predominant rational metaphor used of God in the Bible" (1989:160).

64 Mettinger seems to work primarily with extra-biblical texts, proceeding from there in a somewhat arbitrary way to the biblical text (1989:139f.). From the perspective of religious history, Keel and Uehlinger have produced an iconographic study of ca. 8500 stamp-seals from excavations in Palestine/Israel. At the end of this valuable contribution, the authors ask some important questions with regard to religious historical reconstructions in Israel and Judah: "Wir glauben nicht, daß es in Israel und Juda eine eigentliche Jahwe-Ikonographie gegeben hat. Dies heißt nicht, daß nicht manche Israelitinnen oder Israeliten, Judäerinnen oder Judäer im einen und andern der hier vorgestellten Bilder eine angemessene Darstellung ihres Gottes erkannt hätten. Aber reicht das für den Versuch, eine Religionsgeschichte Israels aufgrund nicht nur epigraphischer, sondern auch und vor allem ikonographischer Zeugnisse zu skizzieren?" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:472).

For a literary historical perspective, a short note has to suffice: the notion that biblical literature is a mere reflection of the influence Canaanite, and especially Ugaritic, religious literature had on Israel's literary history, has not left the realm of an unproved hypothesis.[65] Although we acknowledge the ancient Near Eastern cultural and literary historical stream of which the literature of the Old Testament was naturally a part, we do not *a priori* exclude the possibility of original Israelite literary work in the sense of a certain conceptual autonomy, reflected in the concepts found in the Old Testament, viz., the book of psalms.[66] Thus metaphors of God in the book of psalms will first have to be analyzed within their own biblical context before proceeding to the external evidence.[67]

3.1.5. Evaluation of Biblical Metaphor

The discussion of the various aspects of metaphor and their significance for the present study can be summarized as following:
(1) Only during recent years has there been a growing interest of biblical scholarship in methodological considerations about metaphor derived from the field of linguistics and the philosophy of language.
(2) Since there is no general difference between religious and non-religious metaphors, the result of modern research has to be applied to biblical metaphors as well.
(3) The theory of metaphor for this study has been described above as the intermediate theory of metaphor with its delineating criteria. It appears that the most frequent form of biblical metaphor is the interactive metaphor which, in the final analysis, cannot be abstracted successfully.

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[65] Cf. the study of H. Niehr with respect to the origin of Yahwism: "Angesichts dieser Sachlage ist es nicht mehr möglich, in den Pfaden der gängigen religionsgeschichtlichen Arbeit am AT zu verbleiben und zu behaupten, JHWH sei in Israel an die Stelle des Gottes El getreten, um somit das Bild JHWHs als des höchsten Gottes mit Zügen des aus Ugarit bekannten El aufzufüllen" (1990:223). Niehr then proceeds to show that Yahweh rather displays characteristics of the Syro-Canaanite God Ba'alšamen from the first millennium B.C. He proposes that the reception of these concepts into biblical literature took place during the exilic and post-exilic era. Although we can emulate his criticism of an unqualified application of Ugarit literature for the history of Old Testament literature (1990:11f.), his deductions nevertheless seem to only substitute Syro-Canaanite for Ugaritic influence which shifts, but does not solve the problem.

[66] Although coming from an iconographic perspective, Keel and Uehlinger's conclusion "daß weder ein mosaischer Monotheismus noch manche der so beliebten Spät- und Spätestdatierungen von der *external evidence* [his italics] gedeckt werden" (1992:473), seems nevertheless also applicable to the field of external literary historical evidence.

[67] Cf. our discussion above of the comparative method.

(4) There is no final understanding of a metaphor, since every metaphor has its history, i.e., various stages between living and dead, or novel and retired metaphors. Every interpretation is susceptible to the danger of being incorrect.
(5) Metaphorical language is an adequate vehicle and is often used as such in the Bible to describe unobservable realities, especially to talk about God.[68]
(6) Not all God-talk is metaphorical though, and the determining factor for the differentiation between literal and metaphorical use is the question of dependent or independent usage, or in Bjørndalen's terminology, conjunctive or disjunctive use of the elements.
(7) Metaphors of God often use anthropomorphic, as well as theriomorphic and physiomorphic language. However, not every anthropomorphic expression has to be metaphorical in character.
(8) Biblical metaphors of God are a reflection of the *Gottesbild* or *Gottesvorstellung* the respective authors had. The focus of this study is not on a religious historical reconstruction of the concept of God, however, but on an understanding of the metaphors against their biblical and ancient Near Eastern background. Thus the scope of the study is not a diachronic depiction of the issue, but a synchronic comparison, although the differentiation between diachronism and synchronism appears at times difficult, since one works within a certain chronological range.[69]

3.2. SURVEY OF METAPHORS OF GOD IN THE PSALMS

The following synoptic table shows the distribution of metaphors and submetaphors in the Hebrew Psalter. However, it has to be stressed that metaphors at times form clusters, i.e., different metaphors are used in very close proximity to each other, often overlapping each other.[70] It is therefore

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[68] As Mettinger puts it: "During the last few decades the philosophical, linguistic and literary study of metaphor has opened up new vistas. The Old Testament metaphors for God represent an immense collection of material that has never been made the subject of a systematic review in the light of these new insights" (1989:138).

[69] Korpel has touched on the methodological complications of her study in which she compares the religious language of Ugarit with that of the Old Testament: "Because of the prevalent scholarly dissent with regard to the dating of almost every part of the Old Testament, it is unfeasible to draw up a study like this according to any rigorous diachronic plan" (1990:79). Since a late dating, i.e., an exilic and post-exilic dating, of the psalms is by no means scholarly consensus yet, it appears legitimate to work from a larger ancient Near Eastern comparative perspective.

[70] Cf. for example Psa 23 which seems to present the metaphor of God as the shepherd. Note, however, that in vs. 5 suddenly the imagery changes and the metaphor of God as the host becomes dominant (cf. Kraus, 1961:190).

sometimes rather difficult to isolate the various metaphors correctly. Due to that fact, the following survey[71] will appear to a certain extent synthetic, and a number of occurrences will be classified as presenting more than one metaphor. This was done in order to avoid a too atomistic approach, allowing for the intricate literary relationships between different metaphors. In the same fashion, there will be passages listed as pointing to one single metaphor, although there may be indications that their constituent vss. could be part of various different metaphors.[72] However, the procedure of identifying the various metaphors for God in the psalms seems necessary in order to gain an impression of the total variance of metaphors employed by the authors of the various psalms.[73] Proceeding from this, an adequate decision can be made as to which metaphor will be used for the comparative section of the study.

Metaphor	Submetaphor	Occurrence
God's body	face	4:7; 11:7; 13:2; 16:11; 17:2; 17:15; 21:7; 22:25; 24:6; 27:8; 27:9; 30:8; 31:17; 31:21; 34:17; 41:13; 42:3; 42:6; 44:4; 44:25; 51:11; 51:13; 56:14; 67:2; 68:2; 68:3; 68:4; 69:18; 80:4; 80:8; 80:17; 80:20; 88:3; 88:15; 89:15; 89:16; 90:8; 95:2; 96:6; 100:2; 102:3; 104:29; 105:4; 119:135; 139:7; 143:7
	ear	10:17; 17:6; 18:7; 31:3; 34:16; 71:2; 86:1; 88:3; 102:3; 116:2; 130:2
	eye	11:4; 17:2; 31:23; 32:8; 33:18; 34:16; 51:6; 66:7; 90:4; 116:15; 139:16
	eyelids	11:4
	mouth	105:5; 119:13; 119:72; 119:88
	lips	17:4; 89:35
	arm	44:4; 71:18; 77:16; 79:11; 89:14; 89:22; 136:12
	palm	139:5

[71] The table is a synoptic representation of a computer-standardized survey of the Hebrew psalter based on the text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1969), conducted as a preliminary groundwork for the present study. Space constraints do not permit to reproduce the survey here in its entirety. During the survey the metaphors were classified according to main metaphor, its respective submetaphor, metaphor type (i.e., substitutionary, interactive, or ornamental) and metaphor category (i.e., anthropomorphic, theriomorphic, or physiomorphic). For an explanation of the different types and categories of metaphor, cf. 3.1.3.1. and 3.1.5.

[72] E.g. Psa 11:4-6 which was identified as belonging to the God of heaven metaphor although vs. 5 could actually be part of the judge metaphor.

[73] To the knowledge of the present author, a comprehensive list of the various metaphors of God in the psalms on such a scale does not exist up to date.

Metaphor	Submetaphor	Occurrence
	finger	8:4
	feet	99:5
	wings	17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8; 91:1; 91:4
	hand	10:12; 10:14; 16:11; 17:7; 17:14; 18:36; 19:2; 20:7; 28:5; 31:16; 32:4; 38:3; 39:11; 44:3; 44:4; 60:7; 63:9; 74:11; 74:11; 77:11; 78:42; 78:54; 80:16; 80:18; 80:18; 81:15; 88:6; 89:14; 89:14; 89:22; 92:5; 95:4; 95:5; 98:1; 102:3; 102:26; 104:28; 106:26; 108:7; 109:27; 111:7; 118:15; 118:16; 118:16; 119:73; 119:173; 136:12; 138:7; 138:7; 138:8; 139:10; 139:10; 143:5; 145:16
God of heaven	Most High	57:3
	sitting enthroned in the heavens	2:4; 33:14; 103:19; 113:5; 123:1
	sitting enthroned above flood	29:3; 29:10
	enthroned on the cherubim	80:2; 99:1
	firmly establishing the earth	104:5
	looking down	14:2; 33:13; 33:14; 53:3; 80:15; 102:20; 113:6
	bowing the heavens	18:10; 144:5
	coming down from heaven	18:10; 144:5
	delivering from on high	18:17; 57:4; 144:7
	his appearance	29:2
	smoke from his nostrils	18:9; 18:16
	fire from his mouth	18:9
	coals coming forth	18:9
	darkness as his cover	18:12; 97:2
	thick clouds as his canopy	18:12; 89:7; 97:2; 104:3
	hail and fire before him	18:13; 50:3; 97:3; 104:4
	thundering in the heavens	18:14; 29:3; 77:19; 80:8
	storm around him	50:3; 83:16; 83:16
	sending out arrows	18:15; 77:18; 144:6
	flashing lightnings	18:15; 29:7; 77:19; 97:4; 144:6
	shining forth from Zion	50:2
	girded with might	65:7
	light as a garment	104:2
	riding on a cherub	18:11
	flying on wings of the wind	18:11; 104:3
	riding in the heavens	68:34
	his way through the sea	77:20
	testing mankind with his gaze	11:4
	testing	11:5
	raining destruction on wicked	11:6
	sending a scorching wind	11:6

Metaphor	Submetaphor	Occurrence
	uttering his voice	18:14; 29:3; 29:4; 29:4; 29:5; 29:7; 29:8; 29:9
	silencing seas and peoples	65:8; 89:10
	destroying enemies	89:11
	creating heaven and earth	89:12; 89:13
	calling heaven and earth	50:1; 50:4
	establishing mountains	65:7
	making morning/evening rejoice	65:9
	watering the earth	65:10; 65:11; 68:10
	providing people with grain	65:10
	ascending to the height	68:19
	mountain of God (Basan)	68:17
	no one like him among the gods	89:7
	feared in the divine council	89:8
	laughing	2:4
king	king	5:3; 10:16; 44:5; 47:3; 47:7; 47:8; 47:9; 74:12; 84:4; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1; 145:1; 149:2
	king of glory	24:7; 24:8; 24:9; 24:10; 24:10
	kingship belonging to God	22:29
	king above gods	95:3
	sitting in the heavens	2:4
	throne	11:4; 45:7; 93:2; 96:10; 97:2
	sitting on throne	9:5; 9:8; 47:9
	enthroned on the cherubim	99:1
	footstool	99:5
	reigning over all the earth	47:8; 47:9
	strong and mighty	24:8
	mighty in battle	24:8
	Lord of hosts	24:10
	subduing peoples for Israel	47:4; 47:4
	destroying the leviathan	74:13; 74:14
	creating heaven and earth	74:15; 74:16; 74:17
	clothed in majesty and strength	93:1
	procession into the temple	68:25
	begetting his royal son	2:7
	choosing a heritage for Jacob	47:5
	laughing	2:4
God's dwelling	God's dwelling	43:3; 84:2
	Zion	9:12; 48:3; 65:2; 74:2; 76:3; 132:13
	city of God	46:5; 48:2; 48:9
	habitation of the Most High	46:5; 132:7; 132:13
	holy hill	3:5; 15:1; 43:3; 48:2
	palace/temple	11:4; 27:4; 48:4; 48:10
	his house	5:8; 26:8; 27:4; 36:9; 42:5; 52:10; 55:15; 65:5; 66:13; 84:5; 92:14; 93:5; 116:19; 118:26; 122:1; 122:9; 134:1; 135:2
	his courts	65:5

Metaphor	Submetaphor	Occurrence
	his hut	27:5; 76:3
	tent	15:1; 27:5; 27:6; 61:5
refuge	refuge	14:6; 46:2; 59:17; 61:4; 62:8; 62:9; 71:7; 91:2; 91:9; 142:6
	stronghold/fortress	9:10; 18:3; 18:3; 28:1; 28:8; 31:3; 31:4; 37:39; 43:2; 59:10; 59:17; 59:18; 62:3; 62:7; 68:6; 71:3; 90:1; 91:2; 94:22; 140:8; 144:2: 144:2
	tower	61:4
	rock of refuge	71:3; 94:22
	hiding place	32:7; 119:114
	shelter	91:1
	shadow of his wings	17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8; 91:1; 91:4
warrior	shield	3:4; 5:13; 7:11; 18:3; 18:31; 59:12
	taking up a shield	35:2; 35:2
	going out before his people	68:8
	marching through the wilderness	68:8
	scattering kings	68:15
	riding his chariot	68:18
	shattering enemies' heads	68:22
	smiting enemies on cheek	3:8
	breaking enemies' teeth	3:8; 58:7
	breaking the arm of the wicked	10:15
	delivering with sword	17:13
	finding enemies with hand	21:9
	swallowing up enemies	21:10
	putting enemies to flight	21:13
	fighting	35:1; 35:1
	aiming with bow	21:13
	shooting arrows	38:3; 64:8
	drawing a spear	35:3
	bringing desolation	46:9
	fiery furnace	21:10
	Lord of hosts	46:8; 46:12
	refuge	46:8; 46:12
	making wars cease	46:10
	destroying weapons	46:10; 46:10; 46:10; 76:4; 76:4; 76:4; 76:4
judge	judge	7:12; 9:5; 50:6; 75:8; 94:2
	judge of widows	68:6
	sitting on judgement seat/throne	7:8; 9:5; 9:8
	testing (heart, emotions, etc.)	7:10; 11:4; 17:3; 17:3; 26:2; 26:2; 66:10; 66:10; 66:11; 66:11; 66:12; 66:12
	judging	7:9
	judging the divine council	82:1
	putting down and lifting up	75:8
	keeping earth's pillars steady	75:4

Metaphor	Submetaphor	Occurrence
rock	rock	18:3; 18:3; 18:32; 18:47; 19:15; 28:1; 31:3; 31:4; 42:10; 62:3; 62:7; 62:8; 71:3; 71:3; 78:35; 92:16; 144:1
	rock of my salvation	89:27; 95:1
	rock of my heart	73:26
shield	shield	3:4; 5:13; 7:11; 18:3; 18:31; 28:7; 33:20; 59:12; 84:12; 115:9; 115:10; 115:11; 119:114
shepherd	shepherd	23:1; 80:2
	feeding	23:2
	leading	23:2; 23:3; 77:21
	comforting with rod and staff	23:4
	Israel is the flock of his pasture	79:13; 95:7; 100:3
deliverer	lifting of head	3:4
	lifting from the gates of death	9:14
	lifting from the pit of desolation	40:3
	lifting out of the mud	69:15
host	preparing a table	23:5
	anointing the head	23:5
	filling the cup	23:5
	house of the Lord	23:6
father	father	89:27
	begetting	2:7
	father of orphans	68:6
light	light	27:1; 36:10
horn of salvation	horn of salvation	18:3
sun	sun	84:12
support	support	18:19

Table 1: Synoptical table of metaphors and submetaphors

3.4. STATISTICAL EVALUATION OF SURVEY[74]

The perspective gained on the broader distribution of metaphors of God in the book of psalms provides an adequate basis on which to evaluate the material. During the survey 507 occurrences of metaphorical language were isolated,[75] comprising 17 main groups of metaphors. This amount may not

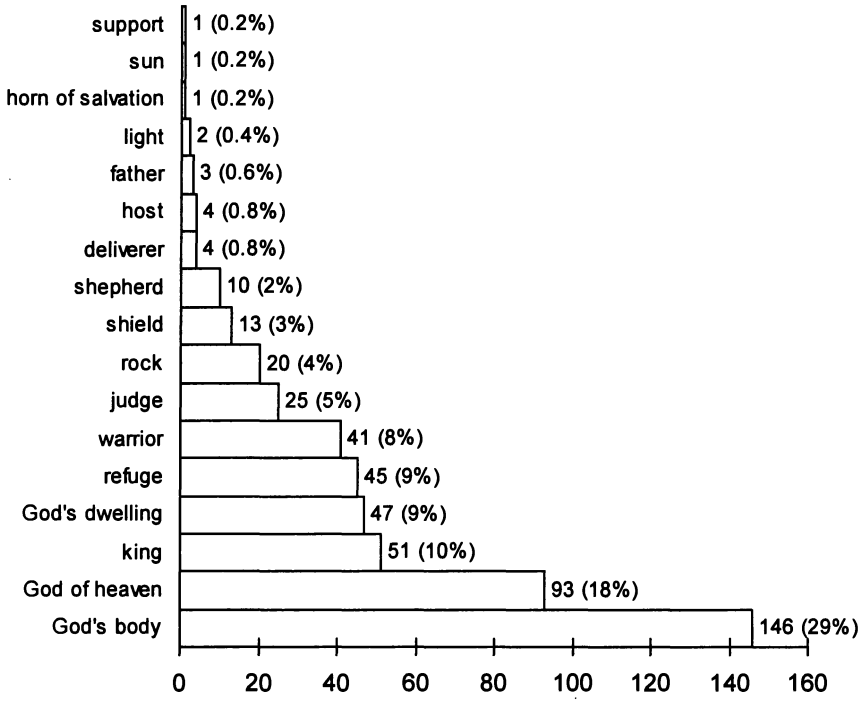
[74] Statistics are capable of distorting the subject matter to a certain extent, since data is represented in a selective way. Nevertheless, the statistical information contained in the following section may contribute to the understanding of the overall picture of metaphors in the book of psalms.

[75] It appears to be important to reiterate the fact that the survey is not designed to provide an exhaustive list of metaphors in the psalms. The sometimes ambivalent character of metaphorical language does not allow for a 'fool-proof' method of identifying the

appear to be over-significant but, although it is certainly correct to assume that the biblical author drew his metaphors from a limited number of literary images, the significance of the number increases nevertheless, if one considers the broad spectrum of submetaphors for each metaphor.[76]

3.4.1. Overall Distribution of Metaphors

The overall distribution of metaphors for God in the book of psalms presents the following results as displayed in **Graph 1**.



Graph 1: Overall distribution of metaphors

It becomes apparent that the God's body metaphor represents the most widely-used metaphor in the book of psalms. However, one has to take into consideration that the anthropomorphic depiction of God is a prevalent standard literary device in biblical writing, while the various submetaphors of this imagery often take on an almost literal character, departing from

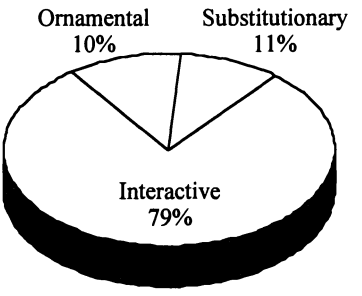
various metaphors. However, through the standardized approach used during the survey, a relatively high accuracy has been maintained.

[76] E.g., the God of heaven metapor has 45 submetaphors which represents a substantial figure.

their original metaphorical intentions. In addition to this fact, the various submetaphors of the God's body are not as related in meaning as is the case with other metaphors. Thus the God's body metaphor presents a special case and should not be treated in the same way as other images. From the graph it becomes clear how the remaining metaphors are weighed according to their occurrence.

3.4.2. Distribution According to Metaphor Type

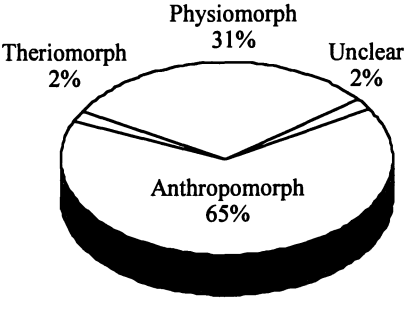
During the survey we have differentiated between interactive, substitutionary, and ornamental metaphor types. The following graph shows the results of this criterion. The graph clearly shows that the majority of occurrences are of the interactive type, i.e., metaphors with a bi-directional relationship between subject reality and representation reality. It was interesting to note that particularly submetaphors of the God's body metaphor tend to be of the substitutionary type, e.g., God's face as a substitutionary metaphor for his presence (Psa 139:7; 140:14; 143:7; etc.). Ornamental metaphors appeared predominantly in reference to the temple in Jerusalem for which the psalmists employed a variety of ornamental imagery (e.g., 132:13; 134:1; 135:2).



Graph 2: Distribution according to metaphor type

3.4.3. Distribution According to Metaphor Category

During the survey three categories of metaphor were identified of which the majority was the anthropomorphic depiction of God, followed by physiomorphic imagery of the divine. The theriomorphic depictions of God were limited to the submetaphor of God's wings (17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8; 91:1; 91:4). The anthropomorphic depiction of God was the predominant medium to communicate the divine by ways of metaphor.



Graph 3: Distribution according to metaphor category

3.4.4. Detailed Distribution of Warrior and God of Heaven Metaphors

The warrior and God of heaven metaphors represent the imagery we would like to concentrate our attention on in the following section, since apart from the God's body metaphor, they represent the most frequently used metaphors, especially if understood as representing a combined metaphor. It appears to be necessary to give a more detailed analysis of their appearance in the book of psalms. The two following tables show their distribution according to the traditional five-fold division of the psalms.

God of heaven				
Book 1: 1-41	Book 2:42-72	Book 3: 73-89	Book 4: 90-106	Book 5: 107-150
2:4; 2:4; 11:4; 11:5; 11:6; 11:6; 14:2; 18:9; 18:9; 18:9; 18:10; 18:10; 18:11; 18:11; 18:12; 18:12; 18:13; 18:14; 18:14; 18:15; 18:15; 18:16; 18:17; 29:2; 29:3; 29:3; 29:3; 29:4; 29:4; 29:5; 29:7; 29:7; 29:8; 29:9; 29:10; 33:13; 33:14; 33:14	50:1; 50:2; 50:3; 50:3; 50:4; 53:3; 57:3; 57:4; 65:7; 65:7; 65:8; 65:9; 65:10; 65:10; 65:11; 68:10; 68:17; 68:19; 68:34	77:18; 77:19; 77:19; 77:20; 80:2; 80:8; 80:15; 83:16; 83:16; 89:7; 89:7; 89:8; 89:10; 89:11; 89:12; 89:13	97:2; 97:2; 97:3; 97:4; 99:1; 102:20; 103:19; 104:2; 104:3; 104:3; 104:4; 104:5	113:5; 113:6; 123:1; 144:5; 144:5; 144:6; 144:6; 144:7
38	19	16	12	8

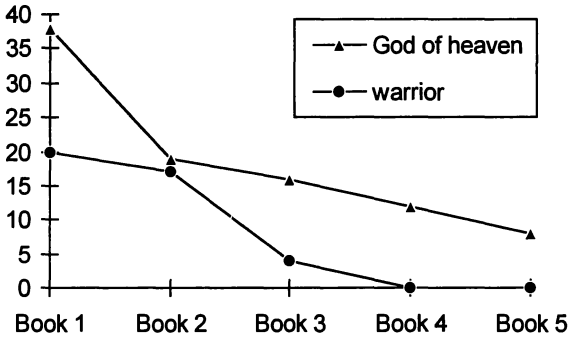
Table 2: Detailed distribution of God of heaven metaphor

For the warrior metaphor the distribution of occurrences according to the five books of the psalter looks as follows:

Warrior				
Book 1: 1-41	Book 2:42-72	Book 3: 73-89	Book 4: 90-106	Book 5: 107-150
3:4; 3:8; 3:8; 5:13; 7:11; 10:15; 17:13; 18:3; 18:31; 21:9; 21:10; 21:10; 21:13; 21:13; 35:1; 35:1; 35:2; 35:2; 35:3; 38:3	46:8; 46:8; 46:9; 46:10; 46:10; 46:10; 46:10; 46:12; 46:12; 58:7; 59:12; 64:8; 68:8; 68:8; 68:15; 68:18; 68:22	76:4; 76:4; 76:4; 76:4		
20	17	4	0	0

Table 3: Detailed distribution of warrior metaphor

Graphically, a comparison between the two at times overlapping metaphors, would appear as follows:



Graph 4: Comparison between distribution of God of heaven and warrior metaphors

Both metaphors are predominant in the first two books of the Hebrew psalter, while the God of heaven metaphor appears almost twice as often in the first book than the warrior metaphor. In the second book the distribution of both metaphors is equal. The tendency of the two metaphors in the remaining three books is clearly on the decline with the warrior metaphor appearing not at all in Books 4 and 5 of the Hebrew psalter. During the following exegetical part we will thus have to concentrate on those psalms where the God of heaven and warrior metaphors occur as a predominant theme. The survey has shown that these two metaphors at times clearly overlap,[77] forming a certain unity which should not be dissected artificially through concentrating on either of them to the exclusion of the other.

[77] This overlapping becomes especially apparent in Psa 83 and 144 which we have identified as belonging to the God of heaven metaphor. However, as Brettler has shown, the imagery employed in these two psalms is also part of the warrior metaphor (1993:135-165).

4. GOD AS WARRIOR AND AS GOD OF HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW PSALTER

After having identified the various metaphors of God which have been employed by the authors of the Hebrew psalter in outline, this chapter will concentrate on the warrior and God of heaven metaphors, trying to establish their respective meaning within an exegetical framework. This will be preceded by some theoretical considerations about the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter.

4.1. APPROACH TO THE EXEGESIS OF THE HEBREW PSALTER

The exegesis of the Hebrew psalter has been dominated by and large by form-critical considerations[1] first promulgated by H. Gunkel at the turn of the century.[2] He classified the Hebrew psalter according to five basic types: hymns, communal laments, royal psalms, individual laments, and individual songs of thanksgiving. These categories have been accepted widely and predominantly by European scholars, and applied with slight modifications throughout the present century,.[3]

A working definition of form criticism is given by Barton: "In the OT, form criticism is a method of study that identifies and classifies the smaller compositional units of biblical texts, and seeks to discover the social setting within which units of these types or literary genres were originally used" (1992:838). The classical approach of the form critical analysis can be summarized as follows: "Analysis of a text begins by identifying each form within it, grouping them together to identify the *Gattung*, and then asking about the text's *Sitz im Leben* [his italics] and its function" (Barton, 1992:839). Although one has to appreciate the contribution of the form-critical analysis in determining the social setting of texts, it has become debatable if it presents an adequate tool for the determination of the actual

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1 "Das gattungsgeschichtliche Verständnis der Psalmen ist heute nahezu ohne Alternative" (Neumann, 1976:2).

2 This is the fifth edition of *Die Psalmen*, originally published in 1892, in which Gunkel put forth his form-critical analysis of the Hebrew psalter.

3 See below under 4.1.1.

usage of a psalm in ancient Israel (Barton, 1992:841).[4] This becomes evident if one reviews the publications that are dealing with psalms-exegesis.

4.1.1. Survey of Literature

A short survey of the relevant literature seems to be appropriate while the main emphasis will be on tendencies within psalms-exegesis of the last 25 years.[5] Whereas Gunkel saw the psalms as individual poems derived from liturgical texts in the cult of Israel, Mowinckel (1921-1924; 1962) proceeded along Gunkel's lines, but simplified his ideas in establishing an actual pre-exilic cultic setting for the psalms texts. Central to his view was the direct relationship between the psalms and Israel's worship which he tried to reconstruct with the aid of comparative material from other ancient Near Eastern cultures. Especially the Yahweh's *Thronbesteigungsfest* (enthronement-, or in a more active sense, throne-ascension festival) played a dominant role in his interpretation of the Hebrew psalter, forming the cultic background to a large number of psalms.[6]
In subsequent publications one can notice a certain degree of polarization between Gunkel's and Mowinckel's views, although since the 1950s the theory of the cultic interpretation and the centrality of the *Thronbesteigungsfest* has noticeably lost impact on the study of the Hebrew psalter.[7] Consequently, it is Gunkel's theory that has since then provided

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[4] For a critical evaluation of form criticism in the psalms, see Hasel (1985:39-42) and especially Weiss (1984:47-73).

[5] Our survey by no means claims to be exhaustive. For further details, reference is made to the summaries of Neumann (1976), Seybold (1981; 1986), Feininger (1981), and Hopkins (1986). We will nevertheless try to find a representative selection of studies and commentaries which will illustrate the various tendencies in psalms exegesis. An interesting article about the history of exegesis of the Hebrew psalter is presented by Tate in which he summarizes the main streams in Jewish and Christian psalms interpretation, focusing on the development of psalms exegesis within the historical-critical method of the past 125 years (1984:363-375).

[6] Cf. Hauge, who tries to demonstrate that the basic assumptions of Mowinckel and his cult-historical methodology could have led to quite a different result in the interpretation of the Hebrew psalter if followed consistently (1988a:56-71).

[7] Neumann summarizes the adherents to Mowinckel's theory: "In unmittelbarer Nachfolge Mowinckels stehen z. B. der Däne A. Bentzen und die Schweden I. Engnell und G. Widengren. ... In der deutschsprachigen Forschung steht dem kultischen Psalmenverständnis besonders A. Weiser nahe" (1976:8f.). An interesting resurrection of Mowinckel's views has been produced in Eaton's *Kingship and the Psalms* (1976) where he opts for a royal interpretation of most of the individual psalms, although his universalistic approach does not seem to fit the diversity of the Hebrew psalter. Cf. Seybold's criticism of Eaton (Seybold, 1981:15-17).

the major stimulus for the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter,[8] although not without alterations and increasing circumspection. Most of the relevant commentaries on the Hebrew psalter have followed Gunkel's form-critical method, although it has to be noticed that the form-critical method finds its main support in German, viz., European circles.[9] One has to ask with Seybold, who is reviewing Neumann's compilation of psalms-exegetical literature, "ob wir fast 70 Jahre [sic] nach Gunkels Erkenntnissen von 1911/13, trotz aller oft etwas zu volltönenden Polemik ... wirklich weit darüber hinausgekommen sind" (1981:4). Form-critical analysis has to face the challenge of being a mere reiteration of a methodology developed under the assumptions and axioms of turn-of-the-century biblical scholarship.

An interesting reaction against the insufficiency of the form-critical method is presented by the fifth revised edition of the *Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament* which was published in 1978 by H.-J. Kraus. A noticeable shift of exegetical method has taken place between the fourth and the fifth revised edition which is explained by Kraus as follows:

> Es hat sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten mehr und mehr gezeigt, daß die Gattungsforschung, wie Gunkel und Begrich sie vorgetragen haben, erheblicher Korrekturen und teilweise grundlegender Neufassungen bedarf. War BK XV in den

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[8] Cf. e.g., Ridderbos (1950); Westermann (1967) who goes beyond Gunkel "in examining the various elements of OT psalm-patterns" (Feininger, 1981:93) and comes to the conclusion that there are only two general types of psalms, i.e., praise and lament. For a summary of further differentiation and development within the form-critical approach, see Hossfeld and Zenger (1993:17f.).

[9] To mention some of the most important commentaries adhering to the form-critical method: Schmidt = HAT 1,15 (1934), Weiser = ATD 14 and 15 (1959), Deissler (1963; 1964; 1965), Kraus = BKAT 15,1 and 15,2 (1960a; 1960b), and Gerstenberger (1988). See also table of commentaries below. However, there are definite nuances in the application of the form-critical method as found in these and other commentaries. Becker in his *Wege der Psalmenexegese* (1976) has differentiated between the following methodological approaches and their respective proponents: (1) *Gebete Angeklagter und Kranker* [prayers of the accused and the sick] (Schmidt, 1934; Delekat, 1967); (2) *Die bundesideologische Deutung* [interpretation according to the ideology of covenant] (Weiser, 1959); (3) *Psalmen in der Umwelt Israels* [psalms in the environment of ancient Israel] - this methodology can only be indirectly linked to Gunkel, since he received substantial impetus for the interpretation of the psalms from the ancient Near East. Becker stresses the importance of the Sumerian and Akkadian prayers while he bypasses the textual material from Ugarit altogether; (4) *Frömmigkeitliche Psalmendichtung* [anthological interpretation of the psalms] (Deissler, 1963; 1964; 1965); (5) *Kollektive Psalmendeutung* [collective interpretation of the psalms] - although Gunkel rejected this method, it can be added to the list of his methodological offsprings via the method of relecture which revived this approach (Mowinckel, 1921; Schmidt, 1934). We have made mention of these methodological nuances because they can be linked to, or are derived from, Gunkel's work, and in this respect can be added to his approach. This has been done for the sake of clarity without overly trying to simplify matters.

> Auflagen 1-4 noch wesentlich bestimmt und geprägt von der Gattungsforschung Gunkels, so erwies es sich bei der vorliegenden Neuauflage als unerläßlich, die Prinzipien und Voraussetzungen, vor allem aber die Grundbegriffe der formgeschichtlichen Forschungen Gunkels und Begrichs zu überprüfen (1978a:38).

Kraus continues his analysis by pointing out a number of inadequacies of the form-critical method, of which the critique of the fundamental principle of *Gattung* seems to be the most significant one: "Wo immer genauere Untersuchungen durchgeführt worden sind, da kommt es an den Tag, daß die kategoriale Bestimmung nicht sachgemäß ist. ... Die Defizienz der Gattungsbezeichnungen und der Klassifikationen wird immer offenkundiger" (Kraus, 1978a:39).[10] In a brief outline of his own changed approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter, Kraus focuses instead on descriptive categories based on content and context of the various psalms which he calls "themenorientierte Formengruppen" (1978a:40). In this respect Kraus seems to follow a literary-historical course of action, stressing nevertheless the necessity of form-critical work on the new categories.[11] Furthermore, Kraus argues for a balanced approach between the literary appearance of the psalms and their cultic significance,[12] while he denies any cyclic enthronement festival as proposed by Mowinckel. In dating the Hebrew psalter, he pushes the oldest psalms back into the pre-monarchic period (Feininger, 1981:98). Kraus's revised commentary on the psalms abstracts the tendency to question a traditionalized concept and move on further with the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter.[13]

An even more literature-oriented approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter is taken by N. H. Ridderbos (1963; 1972) who tries to go beyond a rigid form-criticism toward a style-criticism of the psalms which treats the individual psalms as poetic literary objects of art (Seybold, 1981:6).[14] This

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[10] Kraus also expresses concern regarding the vagueness of the criterion ("gemeinsame Formensprache") which, according to Gunkel, determines the *Gattung*. Furthermore, modern scholarship has gained important insights into Israelite cult and worship which, as the *Sitz im Leben*, is the main constituent of the *Gattung*. One has to ask if these advances would not change Gunkel's categories altogether (1978a:38f.).

[11] Kraus differentiates between six form-groups (*themenorientierte Formgruppen*): (1) תהלה - Loblieder; (2) תפלה - Gebetslieder; (3) מעשי למלך - Königslieder; (4) שיר ציון - Zionlieder; (5) חכמות - Lehrdichtungen; and (6) Lithurgien/Festpsalmen (1978a:40).

[12] At the end of the introduction to his approach, Kraus states his aim, though also aware of the intrinsic limitations: "So werden auch die folgenden Ausführungen nur als ein Versuch betrachtet werden können, die Psalmen nach inneren (formalen und thematisch-inhaltlichen) Ordnungsprinzipien zu disponieren, um damit sachgemäße Voraussetzungen zu einer kontextorientierten Interpretation zu schaffen" (1978a:43).

[13] It appears commendable to see a scholar of Kraus's stature alter his approach in such a significant way.

[14] Cf. also the works of Alsonso-Schökel (1971) and Alter (1987; 1992), who follow a literary approach to the biblical texts.

understanding presupposes an emphasis on the text as an organic unity, passing by questions of redaction and historical integration.[15] Ridderbos's aim is to identify the function of certain style-figures,[16] especially the stylistic device of repetition and chiasmus, and to demonstrate the inner development of the psalm (Neumann, 1976:17). Another adherent of a more literary approach to the Hebrew psalter is M. Weiss who is also indebted to the works of Buber and Rosenzweig and proposes an exegetical method of *Total Interpretation* (1986). In criticizing Gunkel, Weiss adduces that the form-critical method is an exclusive external method of interpretation through which the poetic character of the Hebrew psalter is treated inadequately and the poet's intentions could even be missed altogether.[17] Instead he suggests an internal approach to the biblical text, viz., the Hebrew psalter which would emphasize the primary role of the text itself in the method of interpretation, accepting as its tools literary and philological criticism (1986). While we appreciate the criticisms against the traditional form-critical method (and agree with these to a certain extent), we would nevertheless like to balance Weiss's strong literary approach for the sake of the historicity of the biblical text which may be neglected by a one-sided literary method.[18]

A more syntactical approach representative of recent tendencies in the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter has been taken by W. Groß (1975), although his syntax of Hebrew poetry is only one aspect of psalms exegesis and has

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[15] Ridderbos sees his approach strongly influenced by the works of M. Buber and F. Rosenzweig on the one hand, and the "Neue Stilistik" on the other. Seybold levies the usual criticism against the literary approach to biblical texts: "So bleibt sie [style-criticism] trotz aller Bemühung an der Letztphase der Texts, d.h. an der Psalterform hängen und hält an der aufs Ganze kaum haltbaren These fest, daß Psalmen wie Gedichte fast schulmäßig und zudem aus einem Guß entstanden sind" (1981:8).

[16] Ridderbos demonstrates his stylistic approach in applying it to Psa 1-41. For a summary of his study, see Seybold (1981:7).

[17] "Such a non-literary, even anti-literary notion of interpretation finds full expression in the method of study which Gunkel developed: form criticism, still the dominant mode of Biblical research. Form criticism is an external approach to the Biblical text, which treats the text as an historical datum rather than a literary work of art" (Weiss, 1986:54). He continues to attack the form-critical school from various angles, at times with somewhat sweeping statements.

[18] Weiss, however, seemingly does not intend to abandon historical questions altogether: "We do not, therefore, oppose the historical study of literary works; what we object to is the historical-critical tendency to reduce works of literature to mere 'documents'. We would insist that, whatever the ultimate goal of interpretation might be, a poem must be apprehended *first of all* [his italics] as an artistic creation, on the basis of an interpretation which illuminates it from within, as poetic form" (1986:66). Weiss continues, defending the method of *Total Interpretation* with regard to text critical considerations.

not such far-reaching consequences as the above-mentioned positions. After reviewing the discussion on Hebrew syntax, Groß develops his syntactical methodology with reference to the identification and translation of *wayyiqtol* forms.[19] Although this study bypasses the dichotic positions of the above-mentioned approaches, it nevertheless delineates an important aspect of the interpretation of the Hebrew psalter, and has to be integrated more on the literary side of the spectrum.

Another important aspect of the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter which is also represented to some degree in this study is the comparative method in psalms research. Although psalms exegesis has been indebted to the study of the ancient Near East from early stages,[20] only with the arrival of the textual evidence discovered at Ras Shamra/Ugarit has the comparative approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter become a category in its own right.[21] Climactic for this approach has been the appearance of M. Dahood's three-volume commentary on the psalms in the *Anchor Bible* series (1966; 1968; 1970).[22] Dahood's *opus magnum* is characterized by a thorough treatment of almost the entire vocabulary[23] of the Hebrew psalter against the background of Ugaritic poetic literature, at times producing rather new and unfamiliar renderings of individual psalms. Although its first appearance was greeted with enthusiasm in academic circles, cautious voices soon expressed increasing skepticism against the work. Sauer, in 1974, still wrote: "Die Psalmenexegese kann in Zukunft nicht hinter diese Erkenntnisse [as expressed in Dahood's commentary] zurück. Wissenschaftsgeschichtlich ist eine Zäsur gegeben, die nicht nach rückwärts überschritten werden kann" (406).[24] However, in response to the

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19 For a summary of Groß's methodology, see Seybold (1981:9).

20 Cf. Mowinckel's *Thronbesteigungsfest* which he derived from a parallel to the Babylonian new-year's festival. See also Driver's *The Psalms in the light of Babylonian research* (1926).

21 "Es bedarf keines Nachweises mehr, daß die *literarischen* [his italics] Funde von Ras Shamra / Ugarit in besonderer Weise für die *poetische* [his italics] Literatur des Alten Testaments von Bedeutung sind" (Sauer, 1974:401).

22 Work on the commentary has been preceded by various notes and articles on the subject; cf. Sauer for a bibliography of earlier studies by Dahood (Sauer, 1974:401, n. 2).

23 Sauer calculates an average of approximately 12% verses without comment (1974:401).

24 Four years later, Sauer critically evaluates the commentary with regard to the categories mentioned in the grammar of the Hebrew psalter added to the third volume of Dahood's commentary (orthography, phonetics, pronomina, nouns, verbs, prepositions, syntax, and parallel word-pairs), and comes to the following, more careful conclusion: "... ein immenses ingeniös gearbeitetes Werk liegt vor, das virtuos unglaublich viel Material zu verarbeiten weiß. Das Vorgehen des Verfassers ist aber oft rein assoziativ. Für Dahood ist Textkritik, und damit der wesentlichste Teil seiner Auslegung, mehr eine Kunst als eine Wissenschaft" (1978:385f.). Dahood himself reacted in the introduction of Psalms

exclusive philological approach of Dahood, the following criticisms have been advanced:
(1) Dahood has decidedly disregarded the Massoretic vocalization of the biblical texts (1966:xxii), and although he adheres strictly to the consonantal text, his word-divisions and vocalizations occasionally seem arbitrary and biased toward the Ugaritic textual evidence.[25]
(2) The change of meaning of a Hebrew root on account of its Ugaritic counterpart is not a necessary choice, and presupposes a direct and evolutionary view of the linguistic-historical development from Ugaritic to Hebrew (Craigie, 1983:53).
(3) The main reservations with regard to Dahood's commentary are the governing criteria of any comparative approach, such as chronology, geography, literary forms, etc. Although there is wide agreement that one can compare Ugaritic with Hebrew poetic literature, Dahood seems to practise the comparison too freely, almost presupposing a one-to-one relationship, or even a superiority of the Ugaritic evidence over the Hebrew texts (Craigie, 1983:53).[26]
O. Loretz (e.g., 1979; 1988; 1990), a student of M. Dahood, also follows the Ugaritic approach to the psalms, especially from the viewpoint of *Kolometrie*,[27] exploring the Canaanite parallels to the Hebrew psalter. However, it is important to differentiate his position from that of Dahood. While Dahood opts for an early dating of the Hebrew psalter in order to bridge the gap between Ugarit and Israel, Loretz accepts an exilic or post-exilic redaction for the present form of the psalms. In his opinion, the main contribution that the Ugaritic texts have made for the study of the Hebrew psalter lies in the realm of metrics (1988:8), and not in comparative philology motivated by theological considerations.[28] Along the same line, a

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III to the criticism advanced against the first two volumes of his work, yet continued to emphasize the justification of using Ugaritic texts to elucidate the Hebrew psalter, since the time gap between Ugaritic and Hebrew psalms literature is, according to him, not as wide as his critics pointed out. According to Dahood, the Ugaritic texts are from the period of ca. 1375-1195 B.C., while the oldest biblical poems can be dated between 1250-1100 B.C., with the majority of them originating in the time from 1000-539 B.C. (Dahood, 1970:xxii-xxv).

25 Sauer mentions only eight changes of consonants for 150 psalms proposed by Dahood (1978:358). Cf. also footnote above.

26 Cf. our remarks in the introductory section of the following chapter about the comparative method and its application.

27 I.e., dividing the text into appropriate colons, i.e., its smallest units (Loretz, 1988:10).

28 Loretz explicitly distances himself from his former teacher: "Da in der Psalmenauslegung von der Albright-Dahood-Richtung dieses Problem [i.e., colometry] zumeist mißachtet oder übersehen wird, blieb der wesentliche Beitrag der Ugarit-Texte

student of Loretz and J. C. de Moor, M. C. A. Korpel has published a study about Ugaritic and Hebrew description of the Divine in which she takes the results of modern metaphor theory into consideration (1990).[29] Fundamental to Korpel's approach[30] is the notion that Ugaritic is directly compatible to the Hebrew of the biblical texts, inasmuch as she even consciously bypasses the diachronic question.[31]

Besides the textual comparative approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter, the iconographic study of the psalms has gained a growing influence on biblical exegesis. According to O. Keel, one of the main proponents and prominent applicants of this approach, the relationship between the biblical text and ancient Near Eastern iconography is as follows: "The relationship between the Bible and iconography is here understood as the influence of the contemporaneous art on the biblical texts in Israel itself ... and in the neighboring countries..." (1992:358). The type of comparison endeavored is not as much historical in the sense of illustrating the biblical texts, but rather lies in the realm of concepts and ideas.[32]

The biblical text, and especially the Hebrew psalter with its rich imagery, lends itself to such a kind of study, and Keel has opened up this vista of psalms exegesis with his widely read *Die Welt der altorientalischen*

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zum Verständnis der hebr. Poesie bisher unbeachtet. Die bis jetzt postulierten Parallelen zwischen den Ugarit-Texten und den Psalmen sind deshalb m.E. einer Überprüfung zu unterziehen und auf die Tragfähigkeit ihres Fundamentes hin zu untersuchen. Entgegen den seit langem und mit Energie erhobenen Vorwürfen gegen die sog. vor-ugaritische Psalmenauslegung dürfte bei der Suche nach den Beziehungen zwischen den Ugarit-Texten und Psalmen die Frage zu stellen sein, ob bisher nicht die Parallelen-Hascherei im Vordergrund gestanden ist, und aufgrund theologischer Vor-Urteile nicht gerade der wesentliche Beitrag der Ugarit-Texte zu einem neuen Verständnis der Psalmen, der in der Einsicht in die kanaanäische 'Metrik' besteht, ungebührlich verdrängt worden ist und nur insoweit zu Worte kam, als dies dem Bestreben dienlich war, eine vorexilische Datierung der Psalmen zu postulieren" (1988:8).

29 We have reviewed the content of Korpel's study in the discussion of metaphor theory during the introduction of chapter 3 and will not repeat it here.

30 And here she is in line with Dahood, Loretz, *et al.*

31 "What we aim at is the comparison of the religious language of Ugarit with that of the Old Testament as a whole in its final canonical wording. ... Because of the prevalent scholarly dissent with regard to the dating of almost every part of the Old Testament, it is unfeasible to draw up a study like this according to any rigorous diachronic plan. Although matters of dating will occasionally be touched upon, the main emphasis will be on synchronic, linguistic and religious comparison" (Korpel, 1990:79).

32 "The attempted comparison is that of thought with thought, and pictures are only one type of evidence, while words are another" (Keel, 1993:3:372).

Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament. Am Beispiel der Psalmen (1972)[33] in which he tried to attempt a "systematic comparison of ideas about the world, the temple, the king, etc. found in the psalms, with concepts represented in ANE art, identifying points of contact and divergence" (Keel, 1992:372). Although the study represents an early stage in the development of recent iconographic studies and also of Keel's own perspective on the issue,[34] it nevertheless demonstrates the possibilities of iconography in biblical exegesis. The iconographic comparative approach also constitutes an important aspect of the present study.

After having thus identified the various tendencies in, and approaches to, the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter, we will conclude this section by presenting a synoptic table of the most prominent and recent commentaries on the psalms and their respective working methods underlying their exegetical procedures.[35]

Series	Author	Date	Pages	form-critical	literary	compara-tive	not clear
ATD 14 ATD 15	Weiser, A.[36]	1935	564[37]	✓ M ✓ M			
BKAT 15,1 BKAT 15,2	Kraus, H.-J.[38] (1st-4th edition)	1960	995[39]	✓ G ✓ G			
TBC	Eaton, J. H.[40]	1967	317	✓ M			

[33] The title was perhaps chosen a little bit too boldly, since the study marked only the beginnings of iconographic research and its impact on biblical studies. Nevertheless, it has positively influenced the circulation of this important work.

[34] If one compares the introduction to the *Altorientalische Bildsymbolik* with his article on iconography in the ABD, one can see a definite development toward a more clarified methodology of the iconographic approach. Cf. also his *Methodenschema* in *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden* (1992:267-273).

[35] Obviously, there will be some degree of over-simplification with regard to the working methods of the various commentaries, since they often subscribe to more than one approach which is reflected in the filling in of more than one of the appropriate columns. The order is in accordance with the date of publication. The following sigla are employed: (✓) indicating the presence of respective working method; (🕮) indicating philological orientated comparative method; (🖋) indicating iconographic orientated comparative method; (G) indicating the direction of the form-critical method, i.e., Gunkel's approach; (M) indicating the direction of the form-critical approach, i.e., Mowinckel's approach.

[36] Central to Weiser's approach is the covenant ideology interpretation which nevertheless is a variation on Mowinckel's theme (see discussion above).

[37] Volume 1 and 2 are numbered consecutively.

[38] The first to the fourth edition of Kraus's commentary were still in the tradition of Gunkel's approach; see discussion above.

[39] Volume 1 and 2 are numbered consecutively.

Series	Author	Date	Pages	form-critical	literary	compara-tive	not clear
AB 16 AB 17 AB 17A	Dahood, M.	1966 1968 1970	329 399 491			✓🕮 ✓🕮 ✓🕮	
NCBC NCBC	Anderson, A.[41]	1972	966[42]	✓ G/M ✓ G/M			✓ ✓
TOTC	Kidner, D.[43]	1973a-b	492[44]				✓
SB 7,1 SB 7,2	Beaucamp, E.[45]	1976 1979	330 340	✓	✓		
BKAT 15,1 BKAT 15,2	Kraus, H.-J.[46] (5th edition)	1978	1171[47]	(✓) (✓)	✓ ✓		

[40] Eaton subscribes to the cultic view of the psalms with a royal interpretation of the majority of individual psalms (1967:20).

[41] Anderson seems to try to accommodate all directions of psalms exegesis, while he sees no drastically conflicting differences between the views of Gunkel, Mowinckel, Weiser, Kraus, and Westermann which could not be consolidated into one overall system (1972:30f.).

[42] Volume 1 and 2 are numbered consecutively.

[43] Kidner is not altogether clear on his approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter. After having summarized the various views, he emphasizes the concept of actualization (relecture?) of the psalms in Israelite worship. Furthermore, he acknowledges the importance of the headings for the interpretation of the psalms, and points out the fallacies of the comparative religion approach to the Hebrew psalter (1973a:14-18). In his somewhat metaphorical conclusion he expresses his skepticism against an exclusively liturgical interpretation of the psalms: "... the Psalter, taken on its own terms, is not so much a liturgical library, storing up standard literature for cultic requirements, as a hospitable house, well lived in, where most things can be found and borrowed after some searching and whose first occupants have left on it everywhere the imprint of their experiences and the stamp of their characters" (1973a:18).

[44] The commentary is divided into two volumes of which the pages are numbered consecutively.

[45] Although Beaucamp sees the Hebrew psalter as a witness of the liturgy in Israelite cult, i.e., the "recueil des chants liturgiques d'Israël" (1976:11), he prefers to focus on the usage and reuse of a psalm instead of determining a hypothetical original author and his intentions: "Ajoutons pour conclure que l'origine d'une pièce liturgique compte moins que son utilisation. Il est plus utile ici de déterminer à quoi elle a servi, que de tenter de découvrir ce qu'elle avait d'abord primitivement signifiè. Son sens profond n'est pas à chercher dans les intentions d'un hypothètique auteur; il n'est autre que celui qu'a consacré l'usage, celui que la tradition a conservé" (1976:13). Nevertheless, Beaucamp sees the formation of the Hebrew psalter according to the threefold religious-historical development from the beginnings of the monarchy via the reforms of Josiah to post-exilic times, while the written tradition of the psalms can only be attributed to the time after the exile. His emphasis, however, lies in the realm of the relecture of the psalms.

[46] It appeared necessary to also include the fifth edition of Kraus's commentary on the psalms, since it has substantially been altered in comparison to the first four editions (see discussion above). The indicated presence of the form-critical method in parenthesis points to Kraus's modified position where he introduces his own form-groups, but tries to make a contribution on a literary-historical level (1978a:49).

Series	Author	Date	Pages	form-critical	literary	compara-tive	not clear
AOAT 207,2	Loretz, O.[48]	1979	522		✓	✓🕮	
WBC 19	Craigie, P. C.[49]	1983	378	✓	✓	✓🕮	
WBC 20	Tate, M. E.[50]	1990	579	✓	✓	✓🕮	
WBC 21	Allen, L. C.[51]	1983	342	✓	✓	✓🕮	
KGT	Ringgren, H.[52]	1987	248		✓	✓	
FOTL 14	Gerstenberger, E. S.[53]	1988	260	✓ G		✓	
ExB 5	van Gemeren, W. A.[54]	1991	880		✓		

However, the practical application in the exegetical part of the commentary is unfortunately inconsistent with his methodological concept, and at times reiterates traditional form-critical analysis (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:18).

47 Volume 1 and 2 are numbered consecutively.

48 Above we have pointed out the differences between Loretz's and Dahood's approaches which may not come out clearly in this table.

49 After giving an introduction of the main tendencies in modern psalms research, Craigie describes the methodological concept of his commentary as follows: "While it [the first volume of the *WBC* commentary on the psalms] is influenced to some extent by all the perspectives presented above, it does not stand consciously in any of the particular schools or traditions which have been summarized. I have followed the broad principles of form-criticism set down by Gunkel, at least insofar as I have recognized the importance of attempting to classify psalms according to their type and to set them in particular life situations" (1983:47). Nevertheless, Craigie also wants to balance form-critical examination against literary analysis inspired by Ridderbos's "new stylistics" (see discussion above). Finally, the Ugaritic evidence from the perspective of Dahood's contributions is also taken into consideration, though in a moderate manner (1983:48).

50 Tate follows his two predecessors of the *WBC* psalms commentary, referring to the introduction to the first volume by Craigie (Tate, 1990:xxiv).

51 Allen also follows Craigie as a methodological guideline in his working method.

52 Unfortunately, this commentary is not available in South Africa. For an evaluation we had to depend on the abstract provided by *OTA*. The work was nevertheless included in our list, since it represents a more recent commentary that also includes iconographic comparative material: "Each psalm is presented by R. [Ringgren] according to a four-part format: Swedish translation, notes (here he discusses individual words along with textual and translation issues), analysis (this segment treats especially of [sic] the psalm's literary form and structure, but also of, e.g., its extra-biblical parallels and NT utilization), and exegesis, elucidating the meaning of the psalm's component units. The work's value is further enhanced by a number of illustrations drawn from ancient Near Eastern iconography exemplifying particular formulations or images of the psalms..." (Begg, 1990:314):

53 Hossfeld and Zenger aptly summarize Gerstenberger's stand within the form-critical tradition which is influenced by a more sociological approach concentrating on the lament psalms: "E. S. Gerstenberger hat durch Beziehung altorientalischer Parallelen den 'Sitz im Leben' der Klagelieder vor allem im Bereich der familiären Frömmigkeit zu erhellen versucht" (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:18).

54 Although van Gemeren claims to take form-critical categories into consideration, his emphasis lies on the literary aspect of psalms exegesis, as can be seen from this

Series	Author	Date	Pages	form-critical	literary	compara-tive	not clear
NEBib 29	Hossfeld, F.-L. and Zenger, E.[55]	1993	318	✓	✓		
HAT 1,15	Seybold, K.[56]	1996	548		✓		

Table 4: Synopsis of commentaries on the Hebrew psalter

While most of the modern commentaries still take Gunkel's form-critical method as the point of departure, there has been the distinct expression of discontent with his approach, and some commentaries have already implemented this in various ways with differing results.[57] It is interesting to note that commentators, though voicing their criticisms against form-criticism, rarely dare to depart explicitly from Gunkel's methodical scheme, but rather try to integrate the form-critical method into an overall approach

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programmatic statement in his introduction: "In approaching the Psalms I am much less inclined to look for the 'functional' element, i.e., how the psalm functioned in ancient Israel. I am also skeptical of understanding the Psalms in the light of Ugaritic studies. In my opinion the expositor is at risk when he explains the text in the context of historical referentiality, liturgy, or cultic *Sitz-im-Leben* [his italics]" (1991:14).

55 After expressing substantial reservations about the form-critical method, Hossfeld and Zenger proceed to list the influencing factors and exegetical approaches that are reflected in their commentary on the psalms: (1) literary analysis (*poetologische Analyse*) along the lines of M. Weiss, L. Alonso-Schökel, N. H. Ridderbos, *et al.* (see discussion above); (2) anthological psalms exegesis under the dominant influence of French scholars with their principle of relecture, i.e., re-working of the psalms under the perspective of post-exilic wisdom schools; Hossfeld and Zenger acknowledge however the danger of a general late dating of psalms; (3) a more differentiated perspective on individual psalms taking literary-critical, tradition-historical, and religious-historical aspects into consideration; this would lead to a more moderate approach to the particular psalm, recognizing its individuality and uniqueness as an expression of the religious history of Israel without trying to make it fit into a certain *Gattung*; (4) the study of the Hebrew psalter as a whole and the inner dynamics of the collection of the psalms, i.e., the redaction-historical and canonical aspects of psalms research; (5) a reception-historical analysis on three levels: inner-biblical, rabbinical and talmudic Judaism, and Christian reception (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:17-25).

56 Seybold's commentary replaces the somewhat outdated one by Schmidt (1934) in the same series. It represents a step away from the traditional form-critical approach, trying to further the appreciation of the correlation between the linguistic form and theological content in the individual psalms considered for themselves. Especially his textual notes, drawn from his familiarity with materials from the Judaean desert, are of great value in the interpretation.

57 Considering the table of prominent psalms commentaries one notices a lack of an iconographic comparative approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter. Only Ringgren's commentary provides iconographic material. A psalms commentary with an iconographic perspective appears to be a desideratum among modern psalms commentaries. Keel's *Bildsymbolik* has certainly been a step in the right direction, but it is not designed as a commentary and cannot function as such.

without realizing at times conflicting axioms of the theoretical foundations underlying their exegetical work.[58]

4.1.2. Exegetical Approach

It appears that the form-critical method, though still predominant in its usage, needs to be received with substantial reservation, since its historical development only seems to have lead to the proposal of further divisions and subdivisions within the major *Gattungen* laid down by Gunkel at the beginning of the century.[59] Therefore, for the present study, we see only limited value in the application of the form-critical approach to the understanding of the warrior and the God of heaven metaphors in the Hebrew psalter. The criticisms of Kraus,[60] Hossfeld and Zenger, *et al.* are valid enough to take the step out of the traditional line of form-critical exegetical work on the psalms. During the exegetical process, the uniqueness of the individual psalm should not be abandoned for the sake of a rigid formal structure. We would agree with Hossfeld and Zenger in a final criticism advanced against the form-critical method which nevertheless addresses the core of the matter:

> Die gattungskritisch dominierte Psalmenexegese läuft Gefahr, den konkreten Psalm, insbesondere sein individuelles sprachliches und theologisches Profil, zu nivellieren. Bisweilen gewinnt man in Kommentaren den Eindruck, es komme beim Verstehen und im Nachvollzug von Psalmen weniger auf die Semantik als auf die "Gattung" an (1993:19).

Understanding the 'semantics' of a psalm, i.e., its inner components and their relation to each other, therefore comes closer to the object of the present study which would shift the exegetical emphasis more toward a literary analysis approach.[61] However, the problematic aspects of the

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[58] A literary analytical approach in its consequent application is not easily reconcilable with a thorough form-critical analysis of the psalm, unless one addresses the exegetical task in a rather departmentalized manner.

[59] Hossfeld and Zenger quote R. Smend's introduction to the OT: "Es gibt hier einen form- und gattungsgeschichtlichen 'Perfektionismus, der zur Sisyphusarbeit immer weiterer Differenzierung innerhalb und außerhalb der unzweifelhaften großen Gattungen führt...'" (Smend *apud* Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:19).

[60] It would be interesting to see Kraus's altered position being applied more consistently in his commentary, but perhaps one has to await another, i.e., the sixth edition of BKAT 15.

[61] Cf., e.g., Weiss, a strong proponent of this exegetical approach and his method of *Total Interpretation*. He stresses the difference between a form-critical and an internal literary interpretation of a specific poem: "The basic principle of Total Interpretation, as opposed to form criticism, is that the interpretation of poetry is not concerned with external aspects, e.g., genre, *Sitz im Leben, Sitz im Kultus* [his italics], or pattern, not with what a particular idiom or motif *generally* [his italics] signifies. The interpreter of

literary method with its occasionally ahistorical notion, and its predominant concern with the final text at the expense of historical exegesis, are noted. Yet, the literary analysis seems be more flexible in accommodating the various features of an individual psalm without forcibly imposing a superstructure, all the while taking into consideration the distinct character of Hebrew poetry.[62]

The most promising approach to the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter, in our view, lies in the comparative method, while comparative is understood in the widest sense of the term. The contribution of Dahood has demonstrated the possibilities, but also the fallacies of this methodology, as has been discussed above. Comparative can be on both the philological and iconographic levels, two integral components of this study, while philological comparison itself can be subdivided into inner-biblical and extra-biblical comparison.[63] The first category of comparison is the inner-biblical philological exegesis of the texts of concern for this study. Therefore, one could term the exegetical method of this study, an inner-biblical comparative historical-philological approach. We follow with this procedure the valid claims made by Talmon (1977) which will be discussed in the introduction to chapter 5.[64] The questions involved in the exegetical process are of classical exegesis: text, translation, historical and literary context, genre, structure, grammar, lexical analysis, biblical context, etc. (Stuart, 1992:682-688; Deist and Burden, 1980). The chronological context for the internal-exegetical comparison will be the literature of the Old Testament, since we accept a broad range of dating for the various psalms from a historical-philological perspective.[65] It is the purpose of this category of comparison to understand the respective biblical metaphors of God within their biblical immediate and wider context.

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poetry must concern himself only with internal aspects, i.e., with what the poet has made of the raw material in the particular poem under consideration" (1984:63). However, with respect to the historical and philological aspects of a poem, he then qualifies his statement and ascertains his support of the historical research: "We do not, therefore, oppose the historical study of literary works; what we object to is the historical-critical tendency to reduce works of literature to mere 'documents'" (Weiss, 1984:66).

62 Cf. the discussion of Hebrew poetry below.

63 Korpel (1990) has substantially contributed to the extra-biblical philological comparison, and reference to her work will be made where necessary.

64 Talmon demonstrated "the need for a definition of the proper procedure to be followed in the comparative philological study of biblical texts and to adduce proof for the maxim that the inner-biblical analysis always should precede the comparison with extra-biblical texts" (1977:347).

65 See discussion on the dating of the psalms below.

4.2. EXCURSUS: THE LANGUAGE OF THE PSALMS

The recognition of the specific genre of literature has become an increasingly important tool in approaching any type of text. In the following, attention will be given to the medium through which the genres of literature we will encounter in our discussion of the warrior and God of heaven metaphors in the psalms are communicated, i.e., the language of verse.

4.2.1. The Nature of Hebrew Verse

The study of Hebrew verse[66] has been the subject of much scholarly interest for the last three centuries, since Bishop R. Lowth[67] in 1753 defined parallelism as "the correspondence of one Verse, or Line, with another" (Lowth *apud* Berlin, 1992:155), and distinguished between synonymous, antithetical, and synthetic parallelism.[68] Only with the beginning of the 1980s could a noticeable different approach be identified. Coming from the realm of literary studies, R. Alter's *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (1985) and J. L. Kugel's *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (1981) enhanced the understanding of biblical verse, especially with regard to the *parallelismus membrorum*, emphasizing the continuity or consequentiality of parallel lines, instead of their synonymy (Berlin, 1992:155). From a comparative perspective, the discovery of the Ugaritic poetic texts has provided an impetus to the study of verse, especially of word-pairs.[69] W. G. E. Watson's *Classical Hebrew Poetry* (1984) presented a useful guide to the various techniques of biblical

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66 Cloete correctly points out the difficulties in terminology, i.e., using prose vs. poetry as an opposing word-pair: "The proper opposite of prose is verse, for which unfortunately the word poetry is often used as a synonym. The word poetry, properly used, implies some judgment of quality and/or substance, whereas the terms prose and verse do not, but refer only to form" (1988:10). In accordance with these terminological guidelines, preference will be given to the term 'verse' over 'poetry'.

67 His work *De sacra poësi Hebraeorum* (1753) can be seen as the initial groundwork for the study of Hebrew verse, and his definition still remains classic, although it has to be qualified in accordance with modern studies of Hebrew verse.

68 It is not the purpose of this study to provide a historical survey of studies on Hebrew verse. For a detailed historical presentation, one may turn to Kugel (1981).

69 Berlin expresses a note of criticism on this particular aspect of poetic research: "Many scholars saw in word pairs the essence of parallelism, the *sine qua non* without which parallel lines could not exist. Furthermore, it was suggested, these pairs formed a kind of 'poet's dictionary' - a poetic substratum on which poets might draw in order to compose parallelism. These conclusions reflect the fact that the impetus for the study of word-pairs was intimately bound up with theories of oral composition, unproved and unprovable at least for biblical poetry" (1992:157).

verse, also including comparative material from Akkadian and Ugaritic sources.[70] More recent models for Hebrew verse have been suggested by linguistic scholars, stressing the grammatical, lexical, semantic, syntactic, and phonological aspects of Hebrew verse.[71] It is important to note that biblical verse cannot be considered as an ancient equivalent to modern Western verse, and therefore cannot be evaluated along the same lines. Furthermore, it has to be stressed that the line between Hebrew prose and verse is not as distinct as in modern Western languages. It would therefore be more appropriate to speak of a Hebrew high or elevated style, instead of biblical verse.[72]

In order to determine some sort of boundary line, dividing Hebrew prose from verse, one has to come to the modest recognition of very limited criteria. Even the presence of parallelism, the traditional marker of Hebrew verse, does not suffice for a clear identification of verse, since it also appears in Hebrew prose (Cloete, 1988:12). One of the more viable rules for the differentiation between prose and verse seems to be the recognition of lines, and Cloete comes to the conclusion: "The lines or cola, then, are the distinguishing characteristic of verse, and they in turn are describable in terms of a versification system" (1988:13).[73]

4.2.2. Hebrew Verse and the Dating of Texts

A recent trend in the literary study of the Bible, has been the notion to analyze the text in its final redaction stage, while questions of date and origin are considered to be of secondary importance and of no bearing to the literary work done on the texts. The book of psalms has presented itself as an ideal object for this approach on account of two reasons: (1) the complicated and to some extent unclear history of its composition; and (2)

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[70] Cf. also his recent article in which he responds to the various criticisms advanced against his work, summarizing the recent developments in the research of Hebrew verse (Watson, 1993:372-384).

[71] For relevant literature, see Berlin (1992:157-160) and LaSor (1979-88a:897f.).

[72] "The concept of 'poetry' is due to recognition of an elevated style which does not conform to classical or western ideas of poetry, and it is therefore possible for an author to move from the more mundane ('prose') to the loftier style ('poetry'), or even somewhere in between, in the same composition" (LaSor, 1979-88a:898). Cf. also Kugel (1981:302). However, in order to avoid unnecessary confusion, we will continue to employ the term 'Hebrew verse'.

[73] Cloete, however, is cautious in admitting that "the lineation or colometry is not easily obtainable from the the [sic] text" (1988:13) which again leaves one with a degree of non-satisfaction in the quest for Hebrew verse.

the poetic language employed by the psalmists.[74] However, there are also voices which ascribe a certain level of historicity to the book of psalms, trying to correlate the structures of biblical poetic language with chronological developments.

F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman pioneered this approach in their joint dissertation submitted to the Johns Hopkins University in 1950, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (1975). The two authors studied four poetic passages[75] from various parts of the Bible, and compared them to the epigraphic evidence from the early development of Northwest Semitic languages. Although this work has to be viewed as a product of its time,[76] the general working hypothesis was that there were some criteria according to which one could identify early Israelite verse.[77] Robertson's *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (1972) ascribed only the poem in Exo 15 unequivocally to the early period of Israelite literature (1972:155). More recently, Freedman has attempted a sequence dating[78] of a group of Hebrew poems, and arrived at a period of time spanning the 12th to the 10th century B.C. (1977:18).[79] He contends that the poetic material of the Bible "is older and more basic than the prose materials" (1977:5).

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[74] As representative of this view R. Alter's *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (1987) may be taken. There is also an interesting article by A. M. Cooper who studies the Davidic psalms and their possible historical interpretation from a historical exegetical perspective and comes to the following conclusion: "We are left ... with only two sensible and productive ways of reading [the psalms]: 1) reading in a strictly canonical context, and 2) reading from an ahistorical or literary-critical point of view" (1983:130). He then opts for the latter view: "Let the text assume a timeless existence somewhere between the author and the reader.... The text, severed from its historical moorings, will cooperate with us and enrich us if we allow it to" (1983:131). For a summary on the change of approach toward the literary text, see Weiss (1984:1-46) who is a proponent of the method of *Total Interpretation.*

[75] The Blessing of Jacob (Gen 49), the Song of Miriam (Exo 15), the Blessing of Moses (Deu 33), and a Royal Song of Thanksgiving (Psa 18 = 2Sa 22).

[76] Cf. especially in this regard the postscript of the authors that appeared with the reissue of the dissertation in 1975.

[77] Cross and Freedman worked on orthography, and particularly on the metrical structure of the poems, pointing out that "an unbalanced meter (e.g., the Qinah meter isolated by Budde, 3:2) does not appear in ancient Israelite poetry" (1975:9).

[78] Cf. also the sequence dating of Albright who ascribes Psa 78, 68, and 72 to the tenth century B.C. (Albright *apud* Freedman, 1980:77f.). His main criteria was the use of repetitive criteria: "Albright was able to discern a pattern in early Hebrew poems exhibiting a gradual decline in the use of repetitive parallelism with a corresponding increase in the use of paronomasia" (Freedman, 1980:77).

[79] The poems under consideration were: the Testament of Jacob (Gen 49), the Song of the Sea (Exo 15), the Oracles of Balaam (Num 23-24), the Song of Moses (Deu 32), the Blessing of Moses (Deu 33), and the Song of Deborah (Judges 5).

However, one has to qualify this statement in consideration of the fact that the poetic text under discussion is mainly found imbedded in prose narrations, and does not originate in an altogether poetical body of literature such as the book of psalms. What can nevertheless be ascertained is the fact that there are criteria of phonology, morphology, grammar, metric structure, etc., that can serve as evidence for the early origin of a poetic text (Watson, 1984:35-41). Each individual case will have to be considered carefully, acknowledging the possibility of at least a relative dating of the texts discussed in the present study.
It is interesting to note that all the attempts to classify Hebrew verse work from the basic principle of the comparative approach, i.e., to date Hebrew verse according to similarities in the verse of cognate Semitic languages, especially Ugaritic and Akkadian. Although there may be methodological issues involved in such a comparison[80] - which will be addressed in the introduction to the chapter six - the basic notion of this approach seems to be valuable. However, it must be kept in mind that this study does not focus on the dating of the psalms under discussion.

4.3. THE TEXTS

The prominent issues and problems in the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter have now been sufficiently identified in order to establish a way in which to approach the texts themselves. In the following we will motivate the selection of relevant texts for this part of the study after which each text or text unit will be investigated.

4.3.1. Motivation for the Selection of Texts

The survey presented in chapter 3 has yielded 41 occurrences for the warrior and 93 occurrences for the God of heaven metaphor. These occurrences are diversified and at times appear disconnected in a single

[80] There seems to be a lack of clarity with respect to the criteria employed in determining the antiquity of a poem. Freedman works from the assumption of the early uses of "divine names and epithets and certain other key terms [?]", coming to the conclusion "that we can distinguish three major phases during the period from the twelfth through the tenth-ninth centuries B.C." (1980:107). Especially the use of the divine name Yahweh is taken as an indicator for the archaic character of the poems Freedman discusses (1980:120). For a chronological table, comparing the dating of Albright, Robertson, and Freedman, see Freedman (1980:118). As for the psalms, Freedman assigns Psa 29 to the 12th, Psa 18 to the 10th, and Psa 68, 72, 78 to the 10/9th centuries B.C.

verse or even just in allusive form. It therefore appears advisable to make a judicious selection of texts that are suitable for the internal-comparative part of the study. The criteria for the selection are as follows:
(1) The respective metaphor must occur within the context of the same metaphor, i.e., the occurrence must be part of a larger unit in which the metaphor is represented, forming a cluster of texts in which the metaphor is the main theme.[81] The psalms in which the respective metaphor quantitatively occurred the most were naturally considered with preference.
(2) Since we are dealing with two metaphors, and since one of the working hypotheses of the present study is that there is the possibility of an interrelation between these two metaphors, i.e., the warrior and the God of heaven metaphor, overlapping occurrences that share the two metaphors will be included and approached with special consideration.
(3) While it is endeavored to select texts that represent the traditional fivefold division of the Hebrew psalter, the majority of the chosen passages come from the first two books, a fact which corresponds to the results of the statistical survey done in chapter 3.[82]
The list of texts that will be discussed in this part of the study reads as follows:
(i) Texts representing the God of heaven metaphor: Psa 29 and Psa 65.
(ii) Texts representing the warrior metaphor: Psa 21 and Psa 46.
(iii) Texts representing both metaphors in an overlapping fashion: Psa 18; Psa 68; Psa 83; and Psa 144.
The selection of texts is an attempt to provide a representative choice with regard to the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, especially from the perspective of their relationship with each other. It is, however, a presumptuous undertaking to do a thorough exegesis on eight psalms within the confines of this part of the study, leading to the pragmatic approach of concentrating on the relevant texts, viz., passages within the respective psalms that deal with our metaphors. In selecting these passages we have focused primarily on the metaphor action, i.e., descriptions of God acting as the God of heaven or as a warrior.

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[81] As has been observed earlier, this procedure goes beyond the identification of applicable terms as observed by Brettler with regard to the warrior metaphor: "In determining whether a particular context presupposes the metaphor of YHWH as warrior, it is not sufficient to look for epithets such as גבור, 'warrior' or איש מלחמה, 'man of war', since a metaphor may be presupposed without its central term appearing explicitly..." (1993:138).

[82] Three of the selected occurrences come from book 1 (Psa 18; 21; and 29); three come from book 2 (Psa 46; 65; and 68); one comes from book 3 (Psa 83); and 1 from book 5 (Psa 144). Note that book 4 is not represented in the selection.

4.3.2. Psalm 18:8-16

Psa 18 belongs to the group of texts which represent both the warrior and the God of heaven metaphors. Especially the theophanic passage in verses 8 to 16 is of principal interest for the concern of the present study.[83]Since Psa 18 presents an interesting transmission history, it has been the subject of various studies. [84] While it is not possible to give a comprehensive treatment of all the issues involved in the interpretation of Psa 18, we will focus on the aspects that are of importance to the present study.[85] A translation of the passage follows below, pointing out the various text-critical problem issues of the text.[86]

4.3.2.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 18:8-16

Psalm 18:8-16	Translation
8a וַתִּגְעַשׁ וַתִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ	Then the nether world shook[87]and quaked,
8b וּמוֹסְדֵי הָרִים יִרְגָּזוּ	and the foundations[88] of the mountains[89] trembled
8c וַיִּתְגָּעֲשׁוּ כִּי־חָרָה לוֹ׃	and they tossed, for he became angry.[90]

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[83] As mentioned above we will limit our exegetical considerations to the given passage within Psalm 18. Nevertheless, we will endeavor to integrate the pericope into the context of the psalm as a whole.

[84] On account of its parallel character to 2Sa 22, Psa 18 represents a field day for every student of textual criticism. Besides the prevalent commentaries, various articles (Couroyer, 1986:38-69; Cross and Freedman, 1953:16-34; Freedman, 1976:55-107; Hossfeld, 1986:171-190; Hunter, 1989:97-107; Kuntz, 1983:3-31; Rüterswörden, 1988:247-263) and even monographs or significant parts of monographs (Schmuttermayr, 1984; Cross and Freedman, 1975) have been devoted to the study of Psa 18 while the text-critical aspect of the text has been the predominant momentum behind the study of this psalm.

[85] Although Psa 18 is a somewhat 'hot iron' in the exegesis of the Hebrew psalter, we found it nevertheless important to include it in our considerations, since both the metaphors under question are represented. Brettler excludes Psa 18 in his study on *Images of YHWH the Warrior in the Psalms* (1993:139) because it is "too long" which does not seem to be sufficient reason for the omission of the psalm, even if it is anthologized in Psa 144 as Brettler adduces (1993:139).

[86] The translation is designed to be close to the text provided in BHS. This will at times produce a less elegant style.

[87] Two Manuscripts read Hithpael ותתגעש instead of ותגעש which would alter the meaning to: 'shake back and forth, toss or reel to and fro'.

[88] 2Sa 22:8 reads ומוסדות but in accordance with the following verb-forms, MT seems preferable.

[89] 2Sa 22:8 reads השמים as a variant for הרים which is not explicable from mere text-critical considerations. Commentators generally follow MT.

[90] לו חרה [אפו] 'his nose became hot for him' - the expression appears here in its eclipsed form which idiomatically refers to God's upwelling anger (cf. Koehler and

9a עָלָה עָשָׁן בְּאַפּוֹ	9a Smoke went up from[91] his nose,
9b וְאֵשׁ־מִפִּיו תֹּאכֵל	9b and fire devoured[92] from his mouth,
9c גֶּחָלִים בָּעֲרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ׃	9c burning coals ignited from him.[93]
10a וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרַד	10a Then he spread apart the heavens, and he came down,
10b וַעֲרָפֶל תַּחַת רַגְלָיו׃	10b and thick darkness[94](was) under his feet.
11a וַיִּרְכַּב עַל־כְּרוּב וַיָּעׇף	11a And he mounted[95] a cherub and he flew,
11b וַיֵּדֶא עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ׃	11b and he swooped[96] on the wings of the wind.[97]
12a יָשֶׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סִתְרוֹ סְבִיבוֹתָיו	12a He appointed[98] darkness as his hiding place[99] around him;[100]
12b סֻכָּתוֹ חֶשְׁכַת־מַיִם עָבֵי שְׁחָקִים׃	12b his pavilion the darkness of waters,[101] tight clouds.

Baumgartner, 1985:331). The explicative character of the expression may point to its glossary function.

91 The usage of the ב instead of מ as a directional preposition is interesting and denotes, according to Cross and Freedman, the archaic character of the poem (1953:24).

92 The verb form תאכל qualifies אש in an attributive manner. One could translate 'devouring fire'. Note also the change from perf. to impf. in the verbal forms which does not seem to conform to a certain scheme, since it goes back to perf. in the following form (cf. Schmuttermayr, 1971:24).

93 The critical apparatus of the BHS evaluates this phrase as a possible gloss.

94 Also: 'cloud' or 'heavy/dark cloud'.

95 Cf. Schmuttermayr's discussion of the verb רכב in which he differentiates between the two main meanings 'to ride' and 'to mount, ascend', favouring the latter for comparative reasons (1971:66).

96 Some mss from the Cairo Geniza and 2Sa 22:11 read the Niphal form וירא 'he was seen' instead of וידא from the root דאה 'to fly fast, fly swiftly, dart through the air'. MT should be given preference in this case, since it is somewhat more in line with the other verbal forms of the text (cf. Barthélemy, Hulst, Lohfink, et al., 1979:186).

97 The Cairo Geniza mss read הרוח which does not alter the meaning of the texts significantly. Dahood discards the MT and vocalizes differently: רוח 'space, interval' (cf. Gen 32:17; Es 4:14), translating 'on wings outstretched'.

98 Two mss, the LXX, the Targumim, and the parallel text in 2Sa 22:12 add the ו-consecutivum. Schmuttermayr comments on the quantitative usage of the ו at the beginning of a line in 2Sa 22 and Psa 18: "In 16 Fällen unterscheiden sich aber beide Fassungen: Achtmal liest 2 Sm die Konjunktion, während die Psa-Rezension sie nicht überliefert, und in den anderen acht Fällen läßt sie die 2 Sm-Fassung gegen die Psa-Rezension aus" (1971:25). For the time aspect of the verb indicated by the ו he comes to the following conclusion: "So läßt sich schließlich für unseren alten Text - vornehmlich aus dem Vergleich seiner beiden Überlieferungen, deren eine an verschiedenen Stellen 'impf. cons.' bietet, während die andere 'bloßes Impf.' führt - der Schluß ziehen, es könne keinesfalls an der Konjunktion liegen, ob die Form im 'Impf.' als Vergangenheit zu verstehen ist" (1971:27). Therefore, the usage of the ו in Psa 18, viz., 2Sa 22 is merely indicative of a closer or looser connection between the individual lines (1971:28). Cf. also Cross and Freedman who summarize the evidence concerning the usage of impf. in Hebrew poetry: "It can no longer be doubted, however, that the imperfect form of the verb was the common, generally used verb form in old Israelite

13a מִנֹּגַהּ נֶגְדּוֹ עָבָיו עָבְרוּ	From the brightness[102] before him clouds[103] went by,[104]
13b עָבְרוּ בָרָד וְגַחֲלֵי־אֵשׁ:	hail[105] and coals of fire.
14a וַיַּרְעֵם בַּשָּׁמַיִם יְהוָה	And[106] Yahweh thundered from[107] the heavens,
14b וְעֶלְיוֹן יִתֵּן קֹלוֹ	and Elyon gave his voice,
14c בָּרָד וְגַחֲלֵי־אֵשׁ:	hail and coals of fire.[108]
15a וַיִּשְׁלַח חִצָּיו וַיְפִיצֵם	And he sent[109] his[110] arrows and scattered them;
15b וּבְרָקִים רָב וַיְהֻמֵּם:	and lightnings[111] he multiplied[112]and he confused them.

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poetry, as in old Canaanite poetry, and that its time aspect was determined by the context, not the presence or absence of the conjunction" (1953:20).

99 סתרו is a minus in 2Sa 22:12 which Cross and Freedman ascribe to a dittographic mistake made by the psalmist on account of the following two words also starting with a ס (1953:25).

100 BHS understands סביבותיו as a possible gloss which can be deleted on metric grounds, since the colon appears somewhat metrically overcrowded.

101 2Sa 22:12 reads חשרת־מים from חשרה 'sieve' (in Neo-Hebrew) instead of חשכת־מים which is understood by Cross and Freedman as referring "to the clouds as the sieve-like containers from which the rain-water drops" (1953:25). From a text-critical perspective this reading, as a *lectio difficilior*, should have preference over the MT in Psa 18:12.

102 Cross and Freedman understand מנגה as a corruption of נגדו with the מ being a dittography of the final consonant of the preceding word (1953:25), omitting it altogether on account of the metrical system observed in Psa 18 which would draw the final phrase of verse 12 metrically to the beginning of verse 13. Hence, they emendate verse 12 and 13 to the following: עבי שחקם נגדה as a variant of נגדה עבם עברו creating the first actual colon (although the text in Psa 18 retains both variants in a conflated manner) and ברד וגחלי אש as the second colon (1953:25). We find, however, that מנגה is not so easily explained as dittography - one has to assume two irregularities in order to make a reasonable omission - and therefore retain it, especially since it constitutes an important aspect of the theophany in itself (cf. Kraus, 1960a:144).

103 LXX is followed here which reads αἱ νεφέλαι indicating a plural form without personal pronoun suffix.

104 2Sa 22:13 reads בערו 'kindle, begin to burn', assuming metathesis between עברו '(clouds) went by' and בערו. However, the character of the accompanying natural phenomena of the theophany seem to legitimate the reading of MT in Psa 18 (cf. Barthélemy, Hulst, Lohfink, et al., 1979:187).

105 Schmuttermayr omits ברד 'hail' as a dittography of עברו, trying to save the metric structure of the verse (1971:75f.).

106 The ו-consecutivum is left out in 2Sa 22:14.

107 Here, again, we come across the archaic meaning of ב (cf. notes to verse 9) denoting 'from'. 2Sa 22:14 has probably been corrected to מן. Note a similar usage in Ugaritic (Schmuttermayr, 1971:76).

108 ברד וגחלי־אש appears to be dittography of verse 13 (cf. Schmuttermayr, 1971:77; Cross and Freedman, 1953:25). However, not every repetition must be the result of dittography, since it also constitutes an important element of Hebrew verse (cf. the various repetitions of Hebrew verse in the victory song of Deborah and Barak in Jdg 5).

16a וַיֵּרָאוּ אֲפִיקֵי מַיִם	And the beds of the ocean[113] were seen,
16b וַיִּגָּלוּ מוֹסְדוֹת תֵּבֵל	and the foundations of the world were exposed.
16c מִגַּעֲרָתְךָ יְהוָה	From[114] your rebuke,[115] o Yahweh,
16d מִנִּשְׁמַת רוּחַ אַפֶּךָ׃	from the blast of the breath of your nose.

From our translation of the text it has become obvious that the passage in Psa 18:8-16 presents numerous textual problems, while the question of dating naturally develops out of text-critical observations. It is interesting to note that Cross and Freedman create from a *Doppeltext* some kind of a *Mischtext*, conflating the two versions under text-critical considerations into one text.[116] Schmuttermayr applies a similar method and follows Cross and Freedman to a large degree. This presupposes an underlying common *Urtext* for both recensions. The proposed date for this text forming the basis of both 2Sa 22 and Psa 18 has varied significantly in scholarly discussion and has been assigned to periods from between the 10th century B.C. and Maccabean times.[117] Even though the question of dating a biblical text often

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[109] Dahood presents an interesting Ugaritic etymology for שׁלח, namely *šlḥ* 'to forge, hammer'. However, the meaning 'to send' fits our context perfectly (cf. Dahood, 1966:109).

[110] 2Sa 22:15 omits the personal pronoun suffix.

[111] Note the inversion of subject and predicate and the change of tempora.

[112] The reading proposed by Schmuttermayr (1971:78) and also Cross and Freedman (1953:25f.): ברקים ברק ויהמם tries to explain Psa 18:15 on the basis of Psa 144:5 which is, however, methodologically questionable, since Psa 144 follows Psa 18 as shown below. They explain the loss of ברק on account of haplography. MT in Psa 18:15 reads the verb רב from רבב 'multiply' supported by the LXX which has the same *Vorlage* as Psa 18 and reads ἐπλήθυνεν.

[113] The reading of ים 'sea, ocean' instead of מים 'waters' is based on 2Sa 22:16 and several mss (De-Rossi, IV, 11) and is more fitting to the concept of מוסדות תבל. The text in Psa 18 could be the result of a misinterpreted archaic *mem*-encliticum (Joüon, 1991,2:473, §129u; cf. Schmuttermayr, 1971:82 who follows Cross and Freedman, 1953:26).

[114] In this occurrence the more archaic usage of the preposition ב instead of מן is preserved in 2Sa 22:16.

[115] The change from third to second person is not found in 2Sa 22:16, but can be observed in other places (e.g., Psa 13:6), and should thus be retained. גערה could also be rendered with 'roar, shout' which is evident from philological comparison with Aramaic גער and Ugaritic *g'r*. Craigie, however, contends that the Ugaritic evidence is too ambiguous, since it is based on a single text in which the word under discussion appears in a fragmented portion of the respective tablet (1983:170).

[116] Psa 18 and 2Sa 22 are of a peculiar character within the corpus of biblical texts, because they represent a *Doppeltext* recorded in different bodies of biblical literature. For a list of other *Doppeltexte*, see Schmuttermayr (1971:15, n. 8). Hossfeld, in his study of the growth-phases of Psa 18, calls it a "formenkritisches Unikum" (1986:173).

[117] The following list shows the various dates assigned to Psa 18, viz., the text behind it, followed by a representative selection of scholars opting for this date: (1) 10th century

epitomizes a scholarly confession of faith which in turn influences the interpretation of the various adduced evidences, we would nevertheless adhere to the early dating of Psa 18, i.e., the 10th century B.C. There seems to be sufficient evidence[118] and even relative consensus[119] that would allow for such a proposal.

4.3.2.2. The Language of Psalm 18:6-18

The following tables seek to provide a basis for a statistical comparison of the vocabulary used in the texts that are of relevance to the present study. While the acquaintance with the terminology of the warrior and God of heaven metaphors in the specific text is endeavoured, it will be interesting to note what kind of semantic word-fields[120] can be established for our metaphors. Along the same line, it will be interesting to observe the variance of terminology employed for the same concept, i.e., one of the two metaphors under consideration. The investigation will be limited to the

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B.C. - Cross and Freedman (1953); Freedman (1976); (2) end of 7th century B.C. - Gunkel (1968); (3) post-exilic period - Deissler (1963); (4) Maccabean period - Duhm (1922). Hossfeld has solved the problem in proposing four diachronic growth-phases for Psa 18: (1) verses 33-50: oldest phase of the psalm; song of praise of an unidentifiable king in pre-exilic times; (2) verses 3-20: the second phase serves as an anthologizing preamble of the psalm, applying the song of praise to every individual in need; it has been introduced shortly before the exile; (3) verses 26-31: in the third phase which has been introduced after the destruction of 586 B.C. the theology of the song of praise is developed for the needs of the exilic community; (4) verses 1; 21-25; 51: the fourth phase transforms the spiritual song into a song of David through the nomistic Deuteronomist during the late exilic period (1986:186f.). While one has to appreciate Hossfeld's literary analysis, different literary components do not necessitate a diachronic origin for the respective parts of the psalm, and the unity of Psa 18 appears to remain a viable option.

[118] A number of indicators have appeared in the footnotes to the translation of Psa 18:8-16 above. To mention a few: (1) the archaic usage of the preposition ב instead of מן; (2) the *mem*-encliticum in Psa 18:16; (3) orthographic archaisms, especially the tendency toward defective spelling in 2Sa 22; (4) indicators of Canaanite influences in vocabulary; (5) similarities to other archaic Hebrew verse (Exo 15; Deu 32; Jdg 5; Psa 68; etc.); (6) particularities in the usage of the divine name. As mentioned above, these criteria do not 'prove' an early date for the text, but they provide a more tangible set of data than literary critical hypothesizing.

[119] The phrase 'relative consensus' refers to the fact that most scholars accept an early date of origin for at least parts of Psa 18.

[120] The purpose of semantics is to decipher the meaning that is transmitted via a word in a certain context, i.e., to go beyond mere etymology. As Louw puts it "'the meaning of a word' is not a statement about something a word 'has' as a 'possession', but merely that meaning is conveyed by *using* [his italics] words as conventional linguistic signs to convey certain features of meaning" (1992:1078). The result of semantic analysis can be described as "translational equivalents". For an introductory article on biblical semantics, see Louw (1992:1077-1081).

usage of verbs and nouns in Psa 18:8-16, providing two separate tables. The order will be in accordance with the appearance of the word in the text, unless there is more than one occurrence of the same lemma.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes[121]
וַתִּגְעַשׁ וַיִּתְגָּעֲשׁוּ	Psa 18:8 Psa 18:8	געשׁ	to shake, reel	Verb of motion. Besides describing natural phenomena (earthquake, tossing sea), the word is also used for drunkenness (Jer 25:16), and figuratively for people facing sudden divine judgment (Job 34:20).
וַתִּרְעַשׁ	Psa 18:8	רעשׁ	to quake, tremble	Verb of motion, also describing natural phenomena, mainly used in theophanic passages (Jdg 5:4; 1Ki 19:11,12; Psa 68:9; 77:19). Denotative of events during God's day of judgment in prophetic literature (Isa 13:13; 29:6; Jer 10:10; 51:29).
יִרְגָּזוּ	Psa 18:8	רגז	to tremble, move, shake	Denoting emotions of fear, anxiety, inner turmoil, also anger (Exo 15:14; 2Sa 19:1; etc.); especially in poetic literature describing natural phenomena which accompany the theophany (Psa 77:17,19; 99:1).
עָלָה	Psa 18:9	עלה	to go up, ascend	Verb of motion, expressing an upward direction of movement. The verb can refer to people or objects.
תֹּאכֵל	Psa 18:9	אכל	to eat, devour	Describing the physiological process of eating; but also figuratively for destruction, especially the destructive power of fire (Job 20:26; 31:12); also during theophany (Psa 21:10; 50:3).
בָּעֲרוּ	Psa 18:9	בער	to burn up, kindle, consume	Describing a process of destruction through fire; also the ignition of a fire. Figuratively for igniting anger, and the quality of God's wrath (Psa 79:5; 89:47).
וַיֵּט	Psa 18:10	נטה	to stretch, spread out, bow	A non-linear horizontal or downward movement. Figuratively in the standard expression 'incline your/my ear' (Psa 45:10; 49:5). In theophany passages (God dividing the clouds before he descends) best translated with 'spread apart' (Psa 104:2; 144:5).
וַיֵּרַד	Psa 18:10	ירד	to descend, go down	Verb of motion, expressing a downward direction of movement. It is mostly used figuratively in poetic literature denoting the process of dying (Job 7:9; 17:16; Psa 22:30).
וַיִּרְכַּב	Psa 18:11	רכב	to mount, ride	A linear movement either expressing the process of riding of or the ascending onto the riding vehicle which can be the wind (Job 30:22), a

[121] The semantic notes have been the result of a concordance lemma search with the aid of BIBLEWORKS FOR WINDOWS 2.2d. The search limits were set to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In cases of more frequent lemmas, the search limits were set to Job, Psa, Pro, Ecc, Sol, and Lam, in order to establish a range of meanings for the respective words in poetic literature. Where possible, the semantic description was undertaken with consideration of the semantic domains provided by Louw and Nida for the Greek of the New Testament (1989:xxiv-xxv).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes[121]
				horse (Job 39:14), the heavens (Psa 68:34), the clouds (Psa 68:4), or a cherub (Psa 18:11) in poetic literature.
וַיָּעָף	Psa 18:11	עוף	to fly	A linear movement denoting an airborne motion.
וַיֵּדֶא	Psa 18:11	דאה	to swoop, fly swiftly	A linear movement denoting an airborne motion, primarily used for the flight of the eagle (Deu 28:49; Jer 48:40; 49:22).
יָשֶׁת	Psa 18:12	שית	to set, appoint	Expressing the notion of exercising control or rule, often used to express God's authoritative action (Job 38:11; Psa 8:6; 21:10). Interestingly, half of the total number of occurrences in the OT are found within poetic literature.
עָבְרוּ	Psa 18:13	עבר	to pass by, go by	A linear movement expressing a transitional motion from one place to another (Job 21:29), often with reference to an observation point (Psa 37:36).
וַיַּרְעֵם	Psa 18:14	רעם	to thunder, roar	A physical event normally accompanying lightning. In poetic literature, especially in theophanic descriptions, the natural phenomenon is associated with the voice of God (Job 34:4-5; Psa 77:18; 104:7).
יִתֵּן	Psa 18:14	נתן	to give	Denoting a transferal of an entity to a recipient on account of the initiative of the giving entity.
וַיִּשְׁלַח	Psa 18:15	שלח	to send, stretch out	A linear movement, causing an object or a person to travel from one place to another.
וַיְפִיצֵם	Psa 18:15	פוץ	to scatter, disperse	A linear movement, causing objects or persons to be redistributed over a certain area. In theophanic passages associated with the dispersing results of God's lightning, figuratively, dispersing his enemies (Job 37:11; Psa 68:2; 144:6).
רָב	Psa 18:15	רבב	to multiply, to shoot	Verb of quantity denoting the substantial increase of a number of something (Gen 6:1; Exo 23:29; Psa 144:13). The same root is used as a military terminus technicus for the shooting of arrows (Gen 49:23) which would fit our imagery here.
וַיְהֻמֵּם	Psa 18:15	המם	to confuse, discomfit	Causing the emotional state of discomfort and confusion in somebody else, especially in enemies during war (Exo 14:24). In poetic literature it only appears in the two parallel theophanic passages (Psa 18:15; 144:6).
וַיֵּרָאוּ	Psa 18:16	ראה	to see, look	A sensory event, actively - to see, and passively - to be seen.
וַיִּגָּלוּ	Psa 18:16	גלה	to expose, reveal	The process of making something formerly hidden visible (Job 12:22), while God is mostly the revealing agent (Psa 98:2; 119:18).

Table 5: Verbal forms in Psa 18:8-16

As becomes apparent from **Table 5**, there are three somewhat unexpected perf. forms in our passage: עָלָה (vs. 9); בָּעֲרוּ (vs. 9); and עָבְרוּ (vs. 13).[122] Most commentators bypass the sudden change of tempora in vs. 9, or find it difficult to explain.[123] Cross and Freedman mention the change of tempora from perf. to impf. and back to perf. in vs. 9, but fail to give any clue as to why it takes place (1953:24, n. 19). It is noticeable that there is an inversion of predicate and subject in the second colon of vs. 9, although the inversion also takes place in the third colon without an impf. form. A satisfactory explanation of the syntactical and morphological phenomenon and its possible interrelation has not been given as yet.

In addition to the change from yiqtol (impf.) to qatal (perf.) forms, there is also an attestation of yiqtol forms that have qatal value with and without a ו-consecutivum. Although this is not in harmony with the normal usage of Hebrew tenses, it can be accredited to the particularities of early Hebrew poetry (Cross and Freedman, 1953:19f.). Joüon notes, however, "that these preterital yiqtols are punctiliar in force, not habitual, repetitive, etc." (1991:369, §113h).[124]

For the table of nouns appearing in the text of Psa 18:8-16 we have omitted the morphological analysis, since it does not have any substantial bearing on the statistical evaluation of the employed vocabulary.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
הָאָרֶץ	Psa 18:8	אֶרֶץ	earth, nether world	Geographical object, denoting the habitat of humanity (e.g., Psa 33:8), also the nether world (Exo 15:12).[125]
וּמוֹסְדֵי מוֹסְדוֹת	Psa 18:8 Psa 18:16	מוֹסָד	foundation	An architectural construction entity which secures the stability of a superstructure (2Ch 8:16; Isa 58:12). Mostly used figuratively for the foundations of the earth (Psa 82:5; Isa 24:18; Mic 6:2).
הָרִים	Psa 18:8	הַר	mountain	Geographical object, high elevation of land, often as a place of refuge (Psa 11:1; 121:1; 125:2). Especially God's holy hill, mount Zion (Psa 2:6), is mentioned. Mountains are also

[122] Vs. 13 has only one verb and does not pose the problem of tempora change.

[123] See for example, Schmuttermayr, who concedes: "... man kann ihn [change of tempora] nicht recht erklären" (1971:62). He examines a similar problem in vs. 5 and comes to the conclusion that the order of tempora can be somewhat arbitrary in older Hebrew poetry, similar to Ugaritic poetry (1971:55). Cf. also Michel (1960:45, §5,8).

[124] He mentions two instances where the preterital yiqtol occurs without ו-consecutivum and is parallel to the wayyiqtol: Psa 18:14 - ...וירעם בשמים יהוה ועליון יתן קלו, and Psa 18:40 - ותאזרני חיל למלחמה תכריע קמי תחתי.

[125] For a list of occurrences where the translation 'nether world' instead of 'earth' is appropriate, cf. Dahood (1966:106, n. 8).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				reminiscent of creation and the cosmic struggle; they fall before God's anger (Psa 104; 144).
עָשָׁן	Psa 18:9	עָשָׁן	smoke	An atmospheric object, in poetic literature mostly associated with God's anger, especially in theophanic passages (Psa 68:3; 104:32; 144:5).
בְּאַפּוֹ אַפֶּיךָ	Psa 18:9 Psa 18:16	אַף	nose, anger	Body part (Job 41:2), but mostly used figuratively for anger, wrath (Job 32:5), especially God's anger (Psa 2:5; 78:38).
וְאֵשׁ אֵשׁ אֵשׁ	Psa 18:9 Psa 18:13 Psa 18:14	אֵשׁ	fire	A natural substance, mostly used figuratively in poetic literature for the destructive power of God's anger (Psa 79:5). Often described as flames coming forth from God's mouth as he appears (Psa 29:7; 97:3).
מִפִּיו	Psa 18:9	פֶּה	mouth	Body part, also figuratively used for a command (Job 39:27) or the edge of a sword (Jdg 3:16).
גֶּחָלִים וְגַחֲלֵי וְגַחֲלֵי	Psa 18:9 Psa 18:13 Psa 18:14	גַּחַל גֶּחֶל	coal, burning coal	Natural substance, but especially in its burning state, e.g., coal from the altar of the Lord (Lev 16:12). In poetic literature as an accompanying phenomenon of God's appearance only in Psa 18.
שָׁמַיִם בַּשָּׁמַיִם	Psa 18:10 Psa 18:14	שָׁמַיִם	heavens	Geographical object denoting the space above the earth. Also God's dwelling place (Job 16:19; 22:12; Psa 2:4).
וַעֲרָפֶל	Psa 18:10	עֲרָפֶל	thick darkness, dark cloud	Atmospheric object, dark storm clouds (Dahood, 1966:107, n. 10), especially God's dwelling place (1Ki 8:12; Psa 97:2). Often in parallelism with clouds (Eze 34:12; Joe 2:2; Zep 1:15).
רַגְלָיו	Psa 18:10	רֶגֶל	foot	Body part, figuratively used to describe dominion (Psa 8:7).
כְּרוּב	Psa 18:11	כְּרוּב	cherub	Supernatural winged creature, guarding the garden of Eden after the fall (Gen 3:24). Artifacts built to overshadow the ark of covenant (Exo 25:18-22; 37:9; 1Ki 6:25-32). God is described as sitting on the cherubim (1Sa 4:4; 2Sa 6:2). Appears three times in poetic literature, once describing God as flying on the cherubim (Psa 18:11), otherwise he sits enthroned on the cherubim (Psa 80:2; 99:1). In Eze 10:18,19 and 11:22 we find a situation similar to the riding of the cherubim described in Psa 18:11/2Sa 22:11, but only here the singular form is used.
כְּנְפֵי	Psa 18:11	כָּנָף	wing	Body part of a flying creature, both natural (Gen 1:21) and supernatural (1Ki 6:24-27). Also: corners, tassels, feathers, fringes of a garment (Deu 22:12; Rut 3:9); figuratively, the ends of the earth (Job 38:13).[126]

[126] God's wings are mentioned several times in the Hebrew psalter (Psa 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8; 91:4), communicating the metaphor of refuge and protection. God's wings may also be referring to the image of God offering protection, while being enthroned on the cherubim, although the cherubim are eclipsed in these contexts, since the image was quite familiar.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
רוּחַ רוּחַ	Psa 18:11 Psa 18:16	רוּחַ	wind	A physical event, but also referring to non-physical entities like 'spirit', 'breath of life', 'mind', etc. In this context it clearly refers to the physical event of wind.[127]
חֹשֶׁךְ חֲשֵׁכָת	Psa 18:12 Psa 18:12	חֹשֶׁךְ	darkness	A physical state. Although darkness is often used in a negative context, e.g., parallel to Sheol (Job 17:13), darkness is an accompanying effect of God's appearance, especially in prophetic literature (Amo 5:20; Joe 3:4). However, the darkness described in this verse may be understood as parallelism to the dark clouds surrounding the epiphany (see below).
סִתְרוֹ	Psa 18:12	סֵתֶר	secret, hiding place	Referring to a physical place of cover, a shelter, also a barrier hindering vision, as becomes apparent from the close parallel in Job 22:14. Both negative (Psa 17:12) and positive (Psa 32:7) connotations are attached to it. In our context it refers to the secrecy-providing cover of clouds surrounding the appearance of God.
סֻכָּתוֹ	Psa 18:12	סֻכָּה	booth, pavilion	A construction object, a physical structure, often of a temporary form (Lev 23:42,43; Neh 8:17). The clouds, surrounding God's appearance, form a pavilion. Again, the book of Job provides the closest parallel (Job 36:29).
מַיִם	Psa 18:12	מַיִם	water(s)	A natural substance. Obviously, the psalmist had the image of a rain cloud, dark with water, in mind. The construct chain חֲשֵׁכַת־מַיִם is unique, although the imagery of darkness and water often appears together, e.g., Gen 1:2; Job 22:11; 26:10.
עָבֵי עָבָיו	Psa 18:12 Psa 18:13	עָב	cloud	Atmospheric object; besides normal rainclouds (Jdg 5:4), it refers to God's dwelling place or chosen mode of appearance (Exo 19:9; Job 36:29), even transport (Psa 104:3).
שְׁחָקִים	Psa 18:12	שַׁחַק	sky, cloud, heaven, dust	Atmospheric object. The construct chain reiterates the thickness of the clouds through repetition of terminology.
בָּרָד בָּרָד	Psa 18:13 Psa 18:14	בָּרָד	hail	A natural substance, often as a natural phenomenon accompanying God's judgment (Exo 9:18-34; Hag 2:17).
יְהוָה יְהוָה	Psa 18:14 Psa 18:16	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name.[128]

[127] Since רוח is such a multi-faceted word within the OT, we have limited our notes to similar occurrences within poetic literature: Job 21:18; 26:13; 30:22; Psa 104:3; 147:18. Dahood vocalizes רוח and translates 'on wings outstretched' (1966:107f.). However, the biblical support he adduces for this reading (Gen 32:17; Est 4:14; cf. also Job 41:8) does not seem to be unambiguous, and God riding on the wings of the wind fits the context well, especially in comparison to the closest parallel text in Psa 104:3.

[128] Freedman has attempted to date a number of archaic Hebrew poems on account of the criteria of divine names and titles. He assumes that the usage of the respective nomenclature "reflects prevailing religious patterns", and distinguishes between three formative phases: (1) 12th century B.C. during which "the name Yahweh is used

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
וְעֶלְיוֹן	Psa 18:14	עֶלְיוֹן	Elyon	Divine name.[129]
קֹלוֹ	Psa 18:14	קוֹל	voice, sound, noise	Means of communication, audible sound. God's voice is often associated with the sound of thunder (Job 37:4,5; 40:9; Psa 29:3; 68:33).
חִצָּיו	Psa 18:15	חֵץ	arrow	Weapon. Figuratively, arrows epitomize God's judgment (Psa 38:3; 45:5; 64:8; Eze 5:16). Also: lightning accompanying the appearance of God from heaven (Psa 77:18; 144:6; Hab 3:11; Zec 9:14).
וּבְרָקִים	Psa 18:15	בָּרָק	lightning, glittering	Physical atmospheric event, often accompanying the appearance of God from heaven (Exo 19:16; Psa 77:18; 97:4; 144:6; Zec 9:14). Also: a brightly shining object (Eze 21:20; Dan 10:6).
אַפִּיקֵי	Psa 18:16	אָפִיק	channel, bed	A geographical object, describing the integral, functional part of an object, e.g., a river-bed (Job 6:15; Psa 126:4), a belt (Job 12:21), a channel (Isa 8:7), ravines (Eze 6:3), springs of water (Sol 5:12).
יָם (מַיִם)	Psa 18:16	יָם	sea, ocean	Body of water, normally referring to the Mediterranean, but also the Red Sea (Psa 66:6; 74:13; 106:9), or the ocean in general. Earth, heaven, and sea together constitute the totality of the created world (Psa 69:35; 95:5). God is traveling through the sea, leaving his footprints (Psa 77:20). Note the parallel imagery in Job 36:30.
תֵּבֵל	Psa 18:16	תֵּבֵל	world	Geographic object, referring especially to the realm inhabited by mankind (Job 37:12; Psa 24:1; Pro 8:31). תבל is often used as an equivalent to ארץ (Psa 77:19), although there are also occurrences where a distinction is made (Psa 90:2).
גַּעֲרָתְךָ	Psa 18:16	גְּעָרָה	rebuke, reproof	Communication with the intent to state, correct, or punish a wrong. God's rebuke often is an event causing natural phenomena (Job 26:11; Psa 106:9; Isa 66:15).

exclusively or predominantly"; (2) 11th century B.C. during which the equation of Yahweh with El took place, plus an additional reintroduction of divine epithets from patriarchal times (*šadday*, *'elyōn*, and *'ōlām*); and (3) 10th century B.C. or later - "in this period a new set of titles and epithets appears, reflecting the syncretistic tendencies of the religion of the monarchy" (Freedman, 1976:56f.). Freedman dates Psa 18/2Sa 22 into the third phase, i.e., the 10th century B.C., since the name Yahweh is predominant (16x), but in connection with a substantial number of divine names and epithets. Although we agree with the date assigned to the poem by Freedman, one nevertheless has to be cautious in the usage of his set of criteria, since it is based on a strong evolutionary view of the development of Israelite religion. As he mentions himself, his approach is characterized by a certain degree of circular reasoning, namely, because of his assumption that there was a development in the usage of divine names, he organizes the poems according to this pattern which in turn supports the assumption (1976:86f.).

[129] Cf. note 128.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
מִנִּשְׁמַת	Psa 18:16	נְשָׁמָה	breath	Physiological entity. Principle of existence. God breathes into man's nostrils at creation the breath of life, his breath (Gen 2:7; 7:22). The same breath is also carrier of God's burning anger (Job 4:9; Isa 30:33).

Table 6: Nominal forms in Psa 18:8-16

Table 6 shows that the nominal forms employed for the description of the appearance of God as warrior and as the God of heaven are predominantly from the realm of natural phenomena, but at the same time, seem to go beyond the portrayal of a mere natural physical event. This would point to the fact that a process of metaphorization is taking place within the linguistic evidence.

On the whole the verbal and nominal forms of Psa 18:8-16 are divergent and strongly descriptive, creating a rich organic structure of metaphorical expressions. As Kuntz observes correctly: "A minimal repetition of nouns and verbs alike suggests to us that an indirect, if not intentionally allusive, element is operative within the theophanic description" (1983:15). Through this literary variance the poet creates an atmosphere of splendor and brilliance, underlining the character of God descending from heaven as a warrior.

4.3.2.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 18

Although we are dealing with a limited amount of text within Psa 18, it is nevertheless important to establish the structure of the psalm as a whole. A presupposition for such an undertaking is the inquiry into the unity of the psalm, i.e., the question if it is legitimate to apply an overall literary structure to the text. Although the psalm has various structural elements,[130] it displays a compositional unity which is substantially supported by the parallel passage in 2Sa 22.[131]In our view, the psalm has to be considered as

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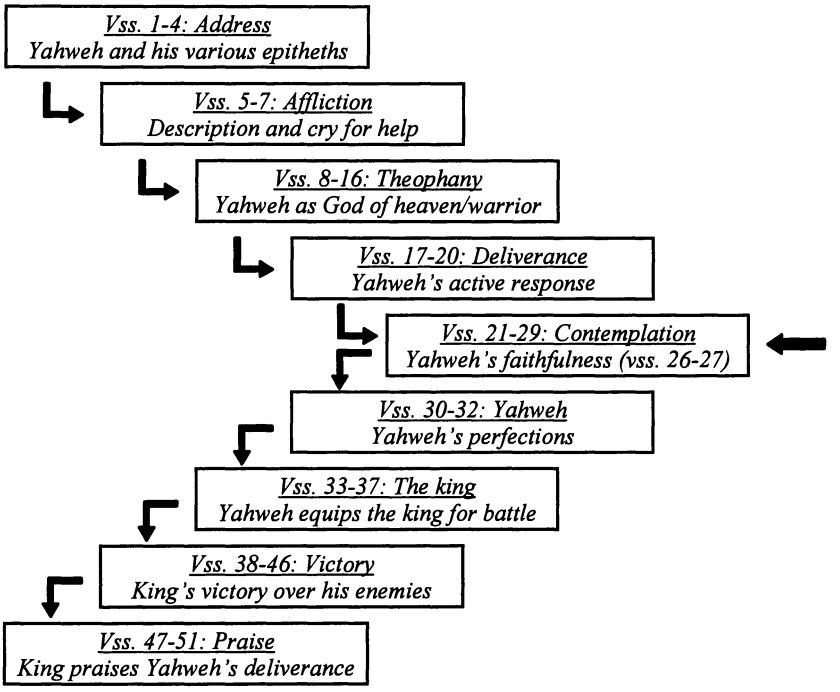
[130] Cf. note 117 and our evaluation of Hossfeld's growth phases.

[131] Since Psa 18 does not fit the form-critical categories sufficiently, a twofold division is often proposed by form-critical exegetes: vss. 1-31 - an individual lament, and vss. 32-51 - a royal thanksgiving psalm. Since this study follows a different approach and there is no evidence in the text that would suggest such a division, the necessity of a twofold structure does not seem apparent. Kuntz argues for the unity of Psa 18 on rhetorical-critical grounds and mentions three indicators: (1) vss. 26-27 has been identified by Cross and Freedman as an ancient gnomic quatrain characterized by "sing-song rhythm [e.g., the repetition of עִם at the beginning of all four colons] and anthropopathic conceptions" (1953:21). The location of this literary element is strategic and it functions as the rhetorical focal point of the psalm; (2) the divine names and epithets have been distributed in an equal manner throughout the psalm; (3) certain key words and concepts

an organic unity, authored by a literary skilled person during the 10th century B.C. The origin of Psa 18 has been traditionally associated with the person of David, and the subscription creates a historical backdrop to the content of the poem.[132] Since an early date for the writing of Psa 18 has been accepted for the present study, there is nothing that would exclude a connection between the Israelite monarch and the poem, this connection possibly being in the form of a court poet who put the king's words into verse, or it possibly having been David himself who contributed to the original form of the poem.[133] The overall structural divisions of Psa 18 can be depicted symmetrically as shown below in **Graph 5**:



Graph 5: Literary structure of Psa 18

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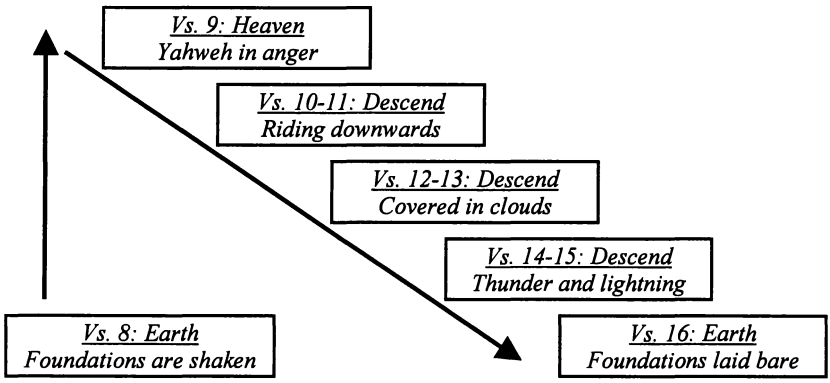
appear throughout the psalm in such a way that they point to their homogenous and conscious usage by the psalmist (Kuntz, 1983:19-21).

[132] We would not like to enter the discussion of psalm superscriptions which can be reviewed in the introduction to any serious commentary (e.g., Kraus, 1960a:xviii-xxx).

[133] Vesco proposes a Davidic relecture of Psa 18, i.e., the final form of Psa 18 as it appears in the MT is the product of the re-interpretative endeavors of a late redactor who read the more ancient part of the poem (vss. 3-20) under the directive guidance of the title and the historical events surrounding the parallel passage in 2Sa 22. This process is comparable to a 'haggadic' type of Midrashic exegesis and assumes that the addition of

It can be seen that Psa 18 is clearly structured with the address and praise enclosing the psalm in a symmetrical way. At the center of Psa 18 the four colons of vss. 26-27, the gnomic quatrain, can be found, forming the center from a literary point of view. Within this structure, vss. 8-16 form a sub-unit,[134] describing God as the God of heaven and warrior via the theophanic event.[135]

The passage vss. 8-16 itself develops a sub-structure within the overall configuration of Psa 18, while especially the spatial sequence of the passage is of interest, indicating the general direction from above to below.



Graph 6: Sub-structure of Psa 18:8-16 with reference to its spatial dimensions

Graph 6 shows the dimensional structure of the passage under discussion. In Vs. 8, מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים serves as the point of departure, while the parallel expression in vs. 16, מוֹסְדוֹת תֵּבֵל, concludes the pericope with the identical concept, thus creating an *inclusio*. The psalmist leads his audience from the earth upward to heaven, the dwelling place of Yahweh, and then descends

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the psalm titles reflects a certain exegetical activity in the process of transmission, attempting a historization of the text (1987:52-57).

[134] There is broad consensus on the structural independence of vss. 8-16 that has been interpreted as an indicator for the late intrusion of the passage into the psalm. But Hossfeld and Zenger correctly observe: "Allerdings kann man die Theophanieschilderung literarkritisch nicht nach Vers 7 abtrennen, denn die pronominalen Rückverweise bei gleichbleibendem Subjekt binden die Schilderung zurück an 7. ... Somit kann man syntaktisch-stilistisch nur von relativer Selbständigkeit sprechen" (1993:119).

[135] Hunter adds vss. 17-18 to the theophany passage, arguing that "the poet still describes the action of Yahweh in the theophany". As a further indicator he adduces the כי which can be found in both vs. 8 and 18 (1987:46). However, the focus of attention clearly shifts between vs. 16 and 17. Furthermore, for the present study, the emphasis does not lie on theophany, but on the *warrior* and *God of heaven* metaphors which often coincide with the theophany event.

together with the divine warrior back to earth, as indicated by ירד (vs. 10) as the *terminus technicus* of the divine descent. "The poet assuredly favors spatial [his italics] imagery in his attempt to portray Yahweh's descent" (Kuntz, 1983:17).[136] While Kuntz interprets the usage of spatial imagery as a mere rhetorical talent,[137] we would like to suggest that it is the terminology of space which constitutes an integral part of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.[138] From a literary perspective, Psa 18:8-16 forms an integrated unit within the structure of the psalm as a whole, displaying a substructure which is designed around the description of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, accomplished by the usage of spatial imagery.[139] Resulting from these compositional intentions, an atmosphere of dynamic motion, rapid action, and vivid imagery is created.

4.3.2.4. Comment on Psalm 18:8-16

We have looked at Psa 18:8-16 from various perspectives, trying to establish the meaning of the passage without the use of extra-biblical comparative methods.[140] What remains is the attempt to integrate the assembled data into an interpretative synopsis of the passage.

Vs. 8: After the psalmist has described his situation, sent up a cry of affliction, and Yahweh has heard his cry out of the heavenly dwelling place (= temple) in vss. 5-7, vs. 8 connects to the preceding events with a consecutive ו and pronominal cross-references, e.g., לו. The natural

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[136] For a discussion of the spatial imagery in Psa 18:8-16, cf. Kuntz (1987:17f.).

[137] "To summarize, among the poet's many rhetorical talents reflected in this magnificent composition is his masterful use of spatial imagery as a most helpful means for emphasizing both the king's hazardous situation and Yahweh's effective intervention in his servant's behalf which enables royal deliverance and military triumph to occur" (Kuntz, 1987:28).

[138] In the course of the exegetical part of the study we will try to substantiate this assumption with further data.

[139] We limited our considerations on the literary peculiarities of our passage to mainly structural issues which promised to yield the most interesting results. Besides the points mentioned, the text also presents other literary devices such as alliteration (vss. 8; 12; 13), assonance (vss. 8; 12), transpositional rootplay (vs. 11), synthetic parallelism ('smoke - fire - coals' vs. 9), chiasmus (יהוה ... וירעם // יתן ועליון vs. 14), etc. Hunter (1987:45) correctly observes that the author of Psa 18 "is constantly playing with words" which contributes to the effectiveness of the metaphorical language employed in this passage. Furthermore, Hunter mentions the usage of another literary device, i.e., the language of mythology, and he identifies the theophanic event as belonging to the category of "soteriological revelation myths" (1987:48). It appears difficult to follow Hunter in his anthropological excursion, since theological considerations and comparative presumptions seem to influence his interpretations substantially.

[140] For a rationale of this approach, cf. the considerations under 4.1.2. Exegetical Approach.

phenomena described now are reminiscent of an earthquake although the terminology employed seems to transcend a mere naturalistic interpretation. Stressing the spatial dimension of the 'below', the psalmist portrays the innermost foundation parts of the earth as being shaken and tossed around violently as in an earthquake, while הָאָרֶץ here refers to the 'nether world' and is parallel to מוֹסְדֵי הָרִים. The terminology employed is allusive of creation and the cosmic struggle (Psa 104; 144). Vs. 8 concludes with an explicative statement in an eclipsed form, providing the reason for the occurring phenomena, i.e., Yahweh's anger.

Vs. 9: The psalmist now shifts the focus of attention toward the 'above' and the verb עלה serves as a marker for this change of dimension. The language is increasingly metaphorical in character. The nominal forms of the verse are typical terminology denoting God's anger which is described as a visible object coming forth from Yahweh's mouth and nose. Although the psalmist is using the metaphor of God's body in this context, he falls short of being too explicit about his actual appearance.[141] Vs. 9 is suggestive of the events surrounding the Sinai revelation (Exo 19:19-25),[142] while there is an atmosphere of imminent action, i.e., Yahweh is preparing for battle (cf. Jdg 5:4-5), furthered by the choice of the verbal form בִּעֲרוּ 'kindle, ignite' which has an ingressive connotation. The גֶּחָלִים are only used here as an accompanying feature of the theophany.

Vs. 10: Before Yahweh starts his descent, he divides the heavens, i.e., spreads apart the clouds like a curtain (Psa 104:2; 144:5). While descending he remains the *Deus absconditus*, since under his feet is thick darkness which is portrayed as a layer of thick, dark clouds epitomizing the closeness of Yahweh's presence.

Vs. 11: Yahweh now mounts the כְּרוּב, a supernatural winged creature[143] which has been juxta-positioned through a parallelism with כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ 'wings of the wind'. While the parallelism indicates a proximity of these two objects, it does not necessitate that they are equivalents, but rather complementary and instrumental in the description of the swiftness of Yahweh's descent. The portrayal of God mounting and riding on the cherub

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[141] Kuntz also observes this possibly theologically-inclined hesitancy of the psalmist to describe the divine form: "Yet in this depiction of Yahweh's angry approach, the poet does not presume to expose the divine form itself. While he enumerates several parts of Yahweh's body - his nostrils (v. 9a), mouth (v. 9b), and feet (v. 10b), he stops short of fabricating a concrete image of the deity" (1983:17).

[142] It is interesting to note that the earthquake, smoke, and fire at Sinai are preparatory events preceding the actual descent of Yahweh. In the same manner, these phenomena are emitted from him, i.e., they also lead out in the theophany.

[143] We will limit our remarks about the cherub here to this rather general description.

is rare, since usually he is depicted as sitting enthroned on the cherubim throne (Psa 80:2; 99:1). Only in Ezekiel do we find a similar situation (Eze 10:18,19 and 11:22), although there the plural form כְּרוּבִים is used. The imagery of this vs. is clearly geared toward the warrior metaphor depicting Yahweh as riding on the cloud chariot, epitomized by the cherub (Longman III, 1982:294f.).

Vs. 12: The theme of Yahweh's dark cover is once more taken up, enhancing the intensity of the imagery. Dark storm-clouds heavy with water are no longer only under his feet, but surround Yahweh in the form of a pavilion as he descends from heaven, and shrouding him in secrecy.

Vs. 13: There is a sharp contrast in imagery to the preceding vs. While vs. 12 creates an atmosphere of threatening darkness, vs. 13 opens with the brightness before Yahweh.[144] The threatening thunderstorm now comes alive, and from the resulting lightning sudden brightness is to be expected. Also 'hail' and 'coals of fire' accompany the natural phenomenon.[145] עָבְרוּ continues the atmosphere of the passage's dynamic motion in this verse.

Vs. 14: The thunder of the storm becomes the voice of Yahweh, viz., Elyon, while 'voice' in connection with God is often used as meaning 'thunder' (Job 37:4-5; Psa 29:3), and again we can observe the blending of naturalistic depiction and metaphorical application. Vs. 14c is identical to vs. 13b, and secures the continuation of the thunderstorm motif, especially the emission of lightning in the following vs.

Vs. 15: Yahweh sends out his arrows and scatters them all over the dark sky, creating the image of lightning flashing back and forth, as becomes evident through the parallelism created in the second colon.[146] Beyond the natural phenomenon described here, the ambivalence of the vs. also allows for the interpretation of the arrows as being directed against the king's enemies. Yahweh's lightning is not merely a natural occurrence, but also a strong indication for the presence of the warrior imagery.

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[144] Some commentators have understood vs. 13 as a "mixture of contradictions" (e.g., Hunter, 1987:50), since it creates distinct contrasts ('brightness' - 'darkness' in vs. 12; 'hail' - 'coals'), but it is certainly coherent when seen in the context of the description of a thunderstorm.

[145] The description seems to be phenomenologically oriented, and other than in vs. 9, 'coals of fire' in this context may refer to the lightning emitted by the storm clouds.

[146] The ambivalence of the pronominal suffixes of the verbal forms is noted. Normally the subject of the suffixes is taken from vs. 3, i.e., the king's enemies. However, it would be a somewhat far-removed cross reference. Keel comments: "Der Psalmist läßt Jahwe die Pfeile nach dem Abschuß noch verwirren, um dem Zickzackweg des Blitzes gerecht zu werden" (1972:196).

Vs. 16: Yahweh's descent is accomplished and the spatial cycle is completed. As in vs. 8, the focus of attention again shifts to the results of Yahweh's anger on the innermost foundation of the earth, while the intensity of the divine impact seems to have increased. While the 'foundations' were only shaken in vs. 8, they are now 'exposed'.
The author of Psa 18:8-16 has created a vivid description of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors by means of a portrayal of natural phenomena. Interestingly, especially the naturalistic descriptions of Job 36 and 37 provide an accurate backdrop and a close inner-biblical parallel to the imagery used in our passage. As mentioned before, the choice of language in the text seems to transcend the mere depiction of natural occurrences, pointing to the reality of Yahweh's descent from heaven to battle against the king's enemies.

4.3.3. Psalm 21:9-13

Psa 21 belongs to the group of psalms which have been categorized as representing the warrior metaphor.[147] Within the Hebrew psalter this psalm is part of a group of royal psalms,[148] and a proximity in form and content to Psa 20 can be observed which goes beyond matters of mere sequence (Kuntz, 1987:157).[149] Psa 21 has to some degree experienced scholarly neglect, and only during the past 25 years has it been the subject of focused attention, especially from a literary perspective.[150] For the purpose of the present study we will concentrate on the passage in vss. 9-13.

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[147] Although the *God of heaven* and *warrior* metaphors are understood as being closely connected to each other, we have also chosen psalms which appear to emphasize only one of the two metaphors.

[148] Our usage of the term 'royal psalms' may not coincide with the form-critical category of the same name created by Gunkel, but rather must be understood along pragmatic lines, i.e., referring to these psalms in which the person of the king is mentioned explicitly: Psa 18:51; 20:10; 21:2; 21:8; 45:2; 45:12; 45:15; 45:16; 61:7; 63:12; 72:1; 89:28; 144:10.

[149] Zenger aptly summarizes the various points of contact between Psa 20 and Psa 21, but at the same time rejects a common predecessor for both psalms on account of their literary distinctiveness (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:139f.).

[150] Besides the current commentaries, the main studies and notes on Psa 21 are: Driver (1957-58:129); Fensham (1965:193-202); Morrow (1968:558-559); Quintens (1978:516-541); Auffret (1980:91-93); Kuntz (1987:157-176); Loretz (1988a:77-106); and Auffret (1990:385-410). Loretz provides a short overview on the state of research for Psa 21 (1988a:77-81).

4.3.3.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 21:9-13

Psalm 21:9-13	Translation
9a תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לְכָל־אֹיְבֶיךָ	Your hand[151] found out[152] all your enemies,
9b יְמִינְךָ תִּמְצָא שֹׂנְאֶיךָ׃	your right hand found out[153] those who hate you.
10a תְּשִׁיתֵמוֹ כְּתַנּוּר אֵשׁ	You put them as (into) a fiery furnace[154]
10b לְעֵת פָּנֶיךָ יְהוָה	at the time of your appearance,[155] o Yahweh.[156]
10c בְּאַפּוֹ יְבַלְּעֵם וְתֹאכְלֵם אֵשׁ׃	In his anger he swallowed them and fire devoured them.[157]

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[151] Dahood translates 'left hand' forming the word-pair ימין - ידך (1966:163, n. 10). However, יד seems to need a qualifier in order to indicate the left hand (cf. Jdg 3:21).

[152] Quintens translates תמצא 'Que ta main attrape tous tes ennemis' and the following corresponding verbs as jussive forms which is based on his structural consideration that vss. 9-13 form an imaginative malediction (1978:535). This is in line with most modern interpreters who either use the future tense or the jussive for a translation of the passage. However, in our translation we follow the above observed principle that the impf. can denote a narrative past in ancient Hebrew verse, especially if it is located at the beginning of a colon. This tendency is also observable in vss. 4-7 of our psalm where the verbforms are usually translated with a narrative past. Michel summarizes: "Am Satzanfang stehende impfa. können vergangene Handlungen bezeichnen. Stehen solche impfa. innerhalb von Erzählungsreihen, die durch impfa. csa. wiedergegeben werden, läßt sich zwar kein Unterschied hinsichtlich Zeitstufe oder Aktionsart nachweisen, der den Gebrauch des bloßen impf. erklären könnte; wohl aber scheint der Handlungsablauf unterbrochen zu sein: das bloße impf. gibt kein unmittelbar folgendes Glied an, sondern steht bei einem gedanklichen Neueinsatz oder greift über das vorangehende impf. cs. zurück" (1960:137).

[153] Two Hebrew mss., the LXX, and Targumim insert לכל־ which appears to be aimed at smoothing out the text. We prefer MT as the *lectio difficilior*.

[154] Driver provides an interesting parallel from an Old-Babylonian letter indicating the punitive practice of casting the offender into a fiery furnace which might correspond to the situation described in our psalm (cf. Dan 3). He mentions that some mss. even read בתנור although he unfortunately fails to furnish the necessary reference for this statement (1957-58:129).

[155] Dahood translates לעת פניך with 'at the time of your fury' (1966:133; cf. also Quintens, 1978:533). While it would suit the parallel expression in the next colon (באפו), there is scarce evidence for such a meaning of פנה, perhaps Psa 34:17 or 80:17. Morrow proposes haplography and reads לעמת instead of לעת, and replaces the preposition כ with ב which would result in the rendering of the verse with "You will place them *in* [his italics] a fiery oven opposite your face". In Eze 3:8 a similar expression is used. As tempting as this emendation may be, Morrow does not give any further explanation as to how this scribal error came about and fails to convince (1968:558-559). We follow MT which is also reflected in the LXX reading εἰς καιρὸν τοῦ προσώπου. However, this constellation does not occur elsewhere in the OT which makes a final decision difficult. Our translation serves to reflect the theophanic element of Yahweh's description as a warrior which has already been encountered in Psa 18, although Psa 21 has not been included with the theophanic passages identified by Jeremias (1965:3-5).

[156] We understand יהוה as a vocative belonging to the second colon of the verse.

11a פִּרְיָמוֹ מֵאֶרֶץ תְּאַבֵּד	You extinguished[158] their offspring from the earth,
11b וְזַרְעָם מִבְּנֵי אָדָם׃	and their descendants from mankind.
12a כִּי־נָטוּ עָלֶיךָ רָעָה	When they extended evil against you,[159]
12b חָשְׁבוּ מְזִמָּה בַּל־יוּכָלוּ׃	(when) they planned wicked devices:[160] they did not prevail.
13a כִּי תְשִׁיתֵמוֹ שֶׁכֶם	For you made them (turn their) shoulder,[161]
13b בְּמֵיתָרֶיךָ תְּכוֹנֵן עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם׃	with your bowstring[162] you took aim against their faces.

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[157] BHS understands the third colon of vs. 10 as a gloss. We have retained MT, since the content of vs. 10c is an integral part of the passage, and the change from 2nd to 3rd person in this colon does not provide sufficient reason to eliminate the line from the text. Würthwein comments on the relationship between gloss and text: "Bei der Arbeit am Text, in die uns die beabsichtigten Änderungen einblicken lassen, handelt es sich um einen vielfach *amtlichen* [his italics] Prozeß, der in frühe Zeit zurückreicht" (1973:108f.).

[158] אבד in combination with מן has a more intense connotation than 'cause to perish' or similar, more passive renderings which are suggested by most translators (Koehler and Baumgartner, 1985:3).

[159] Note the perf. forms in the subordinated clause, and the impf. in the main clause (cf. Michel, 1960:192, §30, 32).

[160] MT has only the singular form, the plural מזמת being substantiated by a few Hebrew mss., the LXX (codex Alexandrinus and the Lucian recension), Symmachus, the Targumim, and the Vulgate.

[161] This figurative expression refers to Yahweh subduing the king's enemies. There is a logical tension between 13a and 13b. How can Yahweh aim at the enemies' faces when they have turned their backs, or at least, their shoulders? Quintens attempts to explain the situation as Yahweh handing over to the king his enemies who are bound to each other with a rope: "Est-il possible de rapprocher le v. des fameuses scénes de captivité du temple de Karnak, où la divinité se poste devant les prisonniers alignés épaule contre épaule et liès entre eux par des cordes, pour les remettre entre les mains pharaon?" (1978:533f., n. 56). Although this interpretation has its merits, there may be another possibility which would be more in tune with the traditional rendering of מיתריך, with 'bowstring' as a *pars pro toto* for bow. As has been observed in the exegesis of Psa 18, a clustering of metaphors is also noticeable in Psa 21:9-13, whereas the sequential logic of the text is not the main focus of attention. The usage of tempora would contribute to such an understanding of two different imageries created alongside each other which may not have a rigid cause-effect relation to each other. However, as will be shown below in the iconographic comparison (chapter 6), it is possible that the enemy is in fleeing position away from the pursuer who makes him turn his shoulder, thus exposing his face toward him.

[162] Although מיתר is not attested elsewhere in that meaning, the phrase תכונן על־פניהם seems to facilitate such a rendering.

4.3.3.2. The Language of Psalm 21:9-13

The passage in Psa 21:9-13 presents twelve verbal and twenty nominal forms which will be analyzed below. In cases where the identical lemmas occur as in Psa 18:8-16, the previous semantic definitions will be utilized, adding context-oriented qualifications where necessary.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
תִּמְצָא תִּמְצָא	Psa 21:9 Psa 21:9	מצא	to find, find out, come upon[163]	Mental, but also physical process of detecting the location of something formerly hidden, both abstract and concrete entities (Job 37:23; Psa 37:36). In our context in connection with 'hand', it takes on a more physical, intensified meaning such as 'seizing, getting hold of' (Psa 10:15; 32:6).
תְּשִׁיתֵמוֹ תְּשִׁיתֵמוֹ	Psa 21:10 Psa 21:13	שׁית	to put, set, appoint, make	Expressing the notion of exercising control or rule, often used to express God's authoritative action (Job 38:11; Psa 8:6; 21:10). Interestingly, half of the total number of occurrences in the OT are found within poetic literature.
יְבַלְּעֵם	Psa 21:10	בלע	to swallow, destroy	The physical act of absorbing a fluid substance (Job 7:19). Figuratively (mostly in the Piel), to cause the complete cessation of a state of existence (Job 8:18; Lam 2:2), also in connection with God's judgement (Exo 15:12; Psa 106:17).
תְּאכְלֵם	Psa 21:10	אכל	to eat, devour	Describing the physiological process of eating; but also figuratively for destruction, especially the destructive power of fire (Job 20:26; 31:12); also during theophany (Psa 18:9; 50:3). The destruction by fire is complete and also has purifying connotations in the OT, e.g., in the sacrificial system.
תְּאַבֵּד	Psa 21:11	אבד	to extinguish, cause to perish (Piel)	Piel: the act of complete annihilation of a state of existence, normally the termination of another person's life through violence (Job 5:7; 143:12). Referring to God it denotes his actions of judgement (Job 4:9; Psa 9:6). It announces complete destruction (Job 20:7), also in connection with fire (Psa 68:2; 80:17).[164]
נָטוּ	Psa 21:12	נטה	to extend, stretch out	A non-linear horizontal or downward movement. Figuratively in the standard expression 'incline your/my ear' (Psa 45:10; 49:5). In theophany passages (God dividing the

[163] These are the most applicable translation equivalents for this context. The range of meaning for מצא is naturally much broader and can be examined in any OT dictionary.

[164] There are 38 Piel occurrences of אבד in the OT: Num 33:52; Deu 11:4; Deu 12:2; Deu 12:3; 2Ki 11:1; 2Ki 13:7; 2Ki 19:18; 2Ki 21:3; Est 3:9; Est 3:13; Est 4:7; Est 7:4; Est 8:5; Est 8:11; Est 9:6; Est 9:12; Est 9:24; Job 12:23; Psa 5:7; Psa 9:6; Psa 21:11; Psa 119:95; Pro 1:32; Pro 29:3; Ecc 3:6; Ecc 7:7; Ecc 9:18; Isa 26:14; Isa 37:19; Jer 12:17; Jer 15:7; Jer 23:1; Jer 51:55; Lam 2:9; Eze 6:3; Eze 22:27; Eze 28:16; Zep 2:13.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				clouds before he descends), best translated with 'spread apart' (Psa 104:2; 144:5). In our context, it denotes the assaultive intention of the evil plan devised against Yahweh.
חָשְׁבוּ	Psa 21:12	חשׁב	to plan, count, devise	Mental process of thinking intentionally in order to bring about a certain course of action, mostly with negative purpose (Psa 10:2; 35:4; 36:4; 41:8; 140:3); or to organize objects according to a certain pattern (Job 19:11;15; Psa 44:23). While it can simply denote the psychological faculty of thinking (119:59; 144:3), the contexts with negative connotations are clearly in the majority.
יוּכָלוּ	Psa 21:12	יכל	to prevail, be able to, endure	Often used as an auxiliary verb, indicating the durative aspect of the verbal action (Psa 18:39; 78:19; Ecc 1:15). Denoting control with an aspect of continuation (Job 42:2). Describing military dominion (Psa 13:5; 129:2). With a negative particle indicating inability (Psa 36:13; Sol 8:7).
תְּכוֹנֵן	Psa 21:13	כון	to direct, aim, set up (Polel)	Polel: Verb of linear motion directed at the setting up of an object or abstract entity (Psa 8:3; 9:7). Terminus technicus for fixing the arrow upon the bow and taking aim (Psa 7:13; 11:2).

Table 7: Verbal forms in Psa 21:9-13

Among the verbal forms of Psa 21:9-13 there are three verbs which occur in an intensified verbal aspect, i.e., either Piel or Polel: בלע (vs. 10); אבד (vs. 11); and כון (vs. 13).[165] These verbal modes create an atmosphere which is supportive of the warrior metaphor expressed in the passage.

The impfs. have consistently been translated with a narrative past tense because, as in Psa 18, an archaic usage of yiqtol forms in this passage could be observed (cf. note 152). While it is generally acknowledged that the use of impf. often denotes the past narrative (Niccacci, 1990:194), the criteria for choosing the respective verb form in Hebrew verse are far from clear, and do not seem to lie in the realm of verbal action.[166]

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[165] Piel has traditionally been described as an intensifying mode of the verb. There are, however, inquiries into the exact character of this intensification (cf. Joüon, 1991:154-156). The Piel forms observed here clearly have factitive meaning, i.e., "das Subjekt bewirkt am Objekt den von dem entsprechenden Adjektiv oder vom passiven Partizip des Grundstamms ausgesagten Zustand" (Jenni, 1981:155).

[166] Niccacci (1991:195-197) observes the following phenomenon: (1) "... YIQTOL can be used as a form for past narrative"; (2) the "use of the forms YIQTOL and QATAL for the same tense in parallel lines". Opting for a different approach to verbal tenses in

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
יָדְךָ	Psa 21:9	יָד	hand	Body part, with reference to God ('your hand') often meaning dominion (Psa 31:16; 109:27), or denoting his acts of judgement (Job 2:5; 30:21; Psa 44:3). Note the parallelism between 'arrows' and 'hand' in Psa 38:3.
אֹיְבֶיךָ	Psa 21:9	אוֹיֵב[167]	enemy	Person who is continuously and actively hostile toward someone. The enemies of the psalmist are a common motif in the psalms (they appear 74 x) and are usually equivalent to Yahweh's enemies (Psa 3:8; 9:6; 18:18; especially 138:7).
יְמִינֶךָ	Psa 21:9	יָמִין	right hand	Body part. The right hand usually carries positive connotations, i.e., support, protection, pleasures, etc. (Psa 16:11; 18:36; 44:4; 98:1). The word-pair 'hand'-'right hand' appears seven times in poetic literature in the same verse (Psa 26:10; 80:18; 89:14; 89:26; 138:7; 139:10; 144:11).
שֹׂנְאֶיךָ	Psa 21:9	שָׂנֵא[168]	hater	Ethical and moral behaviour which can be positively or negatively motivated. God is described as hating evil (Psa 5:6). As a participle in the psalms, it often refers to a group of people who are equivalent to the enemies of the psalmist (Psa 35:19; 38:20; 139:22).
כְּתַנּוּר	Psa 21:10	תַּנּוּר	furnace, oven	Construction object used for baking, melting, or burning of substances under extreme heat (Lev 2:4). God confirms his covenant with Abraham with a furnace going through the parts of the offering (Gen 15:17). Yahweh's anger and judgement are described as a furnace (Isa 31:9; Mal 3:19). Figuratively, the furnace can stand for a certain desire (Hos 7:4-7). The Aramaic equivalent אַתוּן is predominant in the story in Dan 3 pointing to the fact that being thrown into a fiery furnace was a known form of capital punishment (Driver, 1957-58:129).
אֵשׁ אֵשׁ	Psa 21:10 Psa 21:10	אֵשׁ	fire	A natural substance, mostly used figuratively in poetic literature for the destructive power of God's anger (Psa 79:5). Often described as flames coming forth from God's mouth as he appears (Psa 29:7; 97:3). In our context אֵשׁ serves as a qualifier for תַּנּוּר, expressing the intensity of the 'furnace'.
לְעֵת	Psa 21:10	עֵת	time, season	An abstract entity. In connection with ל denoting a point or period in time, while the emphasis is on the content of this point in time rather than on the exact duration of it (Jos 10:27;

Hebrew prose and verse, he comes to the conclusion that "verb forms in poetry do not have a fixed tense".

[167] Although אֹיְבֶיךָ is a participle of איב, we have included it under the nominal forms, since in its usage it has received substantive value.

[168] The same considerations as in note 167 apply to this participle.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				2Sa 11:1; 2Ch 18:24; Job 38:23; Ecc 9:12; Dan 8:17).[169]
פָּנֶיךָ פְּנֵיהֶם	Psa 21:10 Psa 21:13	פָּנֶה	face, appearance, presence	Body part. The metaphor of Yahweh's face often denotes his benevolent, but also his angered presence (Job 13:24; Psa 4:7; 16:11; 27:9; Pro 7:15). In Mic 3:4 Yahweh hides his face at a certain time, i.e., he disappears.
יְהוָה	Psa 21:10	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name.[170]
בְּאַפּוֹ	Psa 21:10	אַף	nose, anger	Body part (Job 41:2), but mostly used figuratively for anger, wrath (Job 32:5), especially God's anger (Psa 2:5; 78:38).
פִּרְיָמוֹ	Psa 21:11	פְּרִי	fruit, offspring	Plant part (Psa 72:16). Figuratively for reward (Psa 58:12), result (Pro 12:14), words (Pro 18:29), or offspring (Psa 127:3; 132:11; Lam 2:20).
מֵאֶרֶץ	Psa 21:11	אֶרֶץ	earth, nether world	Geographical object, denoting the habitat of humanity (e.g., Psa 33:8), also the nether world (Exo 15:12). In our context it refers to the inhabited world.
וְזַרְעָם	Psa 21:11	זֶרַע	seed, descendant	Reproductive part of plants (Gen 1:11). Mostly figuratively for offspring in poetic literature (Job 5:25; 21:8; Psa 25:13; 89:4).
מִבְּנֵי	Psa 21:11	בֵּן	son, child, descendant	Kinship term. For further description of the expression see below under אָדָם.
אָדָם	Psa 21:11	אָדָם	Adam, man, mankind	In the expression בְּנֵי־אָדָם it refers to mankind in general (Psa 12:2; 53:3; 89:47; 115:16).
רָעָה	Psa 21:12	רָעָה	evil, wickedness	Moral quality with negative connotations.
מְזִמָּה	Psa 21:12	מזם[171]	wicked device, discretion	Moral behaviour with negative and positive connotations. Intentionally planned evil deed (Job 21:27; Psa 10:2; Pro 12:2; 24:8). Positively (Pro 14:17).
שְׁכֶם	Psa 21:13	שֶׁכֶם	shoulder, back	Body part. The usage in Zep 3:9 comes closest to the imagery created in our passage.
מֵיתָרֶיךָ	Psa 21:13	מֵיתָר	cord, bowstring	Artifact used for binding, e.g., in the construction of the tabernacle (Exo 35:18).

Table 8: Nominal forms in Psa 21:9-13

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[169] Pfandl, in his exhaustive study on the expression עת־קץ in the book of Daniel, observes the possible eschatological meaning of עת in biblical Hebrew, especially in connection with God's judgements, e.g., Eze 7:7, Isa 13:22, Joe 4:1 (1992:215-217).

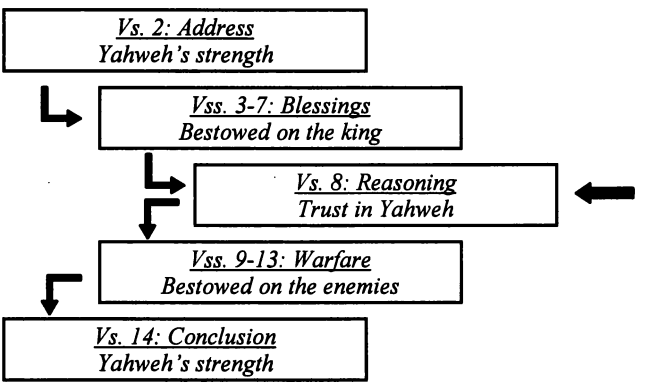
[170] Cf. the remarks on Psa 18:14.

[171] Cf. note 167.

From the analysis of the verbal and nominal forms it becomes apparent that Psa 21:9-13 employs a language that is distinctly reminiscent of warfare and thus portrays Yahweh as warrior.

4.3.3.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 21

Preeminent in the literary discussion of Psa 21 is the question to whom vss. 9-13 are addressed. Kraus understands the passage as directed to the king, but has to eliminate יהוה from vs. 10, in order to establish a coherent interpretation (1960a:168).[172] However, from a literary perspective, Yahweh appears to be the subject not just of this particular passage, but of the whole psalm as well,[173] especially with regard to the literary structure, as will be shown below in **Graph 7**.



Graph 7: Literary structure of Psa 21

Vss. 2 and 14 create a partial *inclusio*, effectively framing the poem by referring to Yahweh and his strength through the repetition of the phrase יְהוָה בְּעֻזֶּךָ (Watson, 1984:284) and the word-pair שׂמח in vs. 2 and שׁיר in vs. 14 (Avishur, 1984:204). In vss. 3-7 the psalmist recounts the blessings bestowed on the king by Yahweh.[174] Vs. 8 serves as the axis of Psa 21, shifting the focus of attention from the king to Yahweh.[175] God as warrior is

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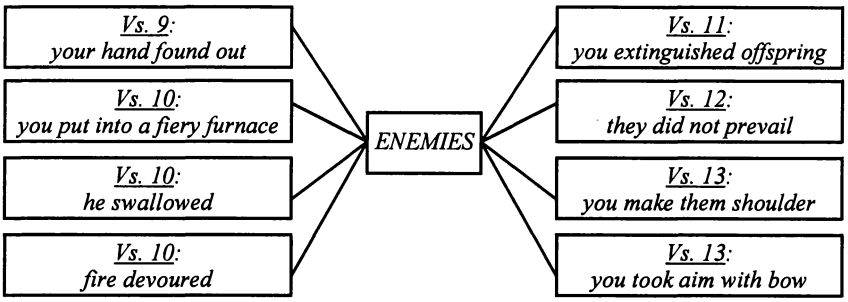
[172] Cf. also Craigie (1983:192), Kuntz (1987:161), van Gemeren (1991:196), and Zenger (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:140), while the latter understands the passage as originally directed to the king with a subsequent addition of the Yahweh address in order to create a reference to Psa 18.

[173] Cf. Michel (1960:223), Fensham (1965:202), Dahood (1966:131), and especially Auffret (1990:404).

[174] The keywords reflecting the central theme of this passage are: נתן (vss. 3a and 5a) and ברכה (vss. 4a and 7a).

[175] The divine epithets יהוה and עליון both occur in vs. 8. Cf. our remarks to Psa 18:14.

described in the following vss. 9-13, substantiating the reasoning of vs. 8 in relating Yahweh's protection for the king through subduing his enemies.[176]



Graph 8: Focusing of imagery in Psa 21:9-13

The passage in vss. 9-13 forms a distinct unit within Psa 21, marked by a clustering of images which communicate the effectiveness of God's protection for the king through his warfare against the king's enemies. The five verses describe the various ways in which the enemies who form the compositional object of each verse have been attacked and finally destroyed. **Graph 8** shows the concentric focusing of the imagery.

Vss. 9-13 communicate the warrior metaphor in a rather concentrated way and clearly show that Yahweh is the recipient of the psalmist's words. On the question of the date of composition for Psa 21, various features point to an early date, e.g., the archaic usage of language (Fensham, 1965:200f.),

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[176] Quintens proposes a similar structural division, although he understands the psalm as a liturgy of an enthronement event or as a commemoration of such (1978:540). This judgement is influenced by his broad comparative approach in which he contrasts Psa 21 with the royal hymn of Thutmosis III and similar texts from Egyptian (15th to 12th centuries B.C.), Canaanite and Aramaic inscriptions (9th to 1st centuries B.C.), and material from Ugarit. His obvious endeavor is to marry the historical-comparative approach with a literary interpretation (1978:520). Thus his literary structure of Psa 21 reflects his somewhat chronologically and geographically divergent comparative attempts: Vs. 2: introduction (indicative); vss. 3-7: five benedictions (indicative); vs. 8: transition (conditional); vss. 9-13: five maledictions (jussive); and vs. 14: conclusion (jussive) (1978:534f.). Fensham also categorizes Psa 21 as an enthronement psalm, but studies it in the light of Hittite vassal-treaties, coming to the conclusion that the idea of covenant forms the central theme of Psa 21, hinging on vs. 8 (1965:200). However, while the results of his comparative approach may be valuable, Fensham's consideration seems to be influenced by a theologically motivated tendency that tries to identify the covenant as the major theme of Israelite history. Auffret approaches Psa 21 from a more literary perspective and proposes a structure that is similar, but more detailed, and considers also the literary relationship between Psa 20 and 21. He concentrates especially on word-pairs and recurring "mots stéréotypée", establishing a concentric symmetry (vss. 2//14; 3//13; 4//12; etc.), a parallel symmetry (vss. 2//8; 3//9; 4//10; etc.), and a chiasm hinging on vs. 8 (1990:402-407).

the affinities to extra-biblical literature[177] (Quintens, 1978:520-534; Fensham, 1965:196-202), the use of impf. for expressing a narrative past, the imagery employed, etc. We would therefore propose a date between the 10th and 8th century B.C.[178]

4.3.3.4. Comment on Psalm 21:9-13

While vss. 3-7 have described Yahweh's blessings bestowed on the king, vss. 9-13 portray Yahweh's warfare, bestowed on the king's enemies. Vs. 8 serves as a transitional point connecting the two units, thus providing the rationale for both.

Vs. 9: The first attack on the enemies is achieved via the imagery of Yahweh finding out the enemies which goes beyond merely locating them, and has to be understood in a more physical way, i.e., seizing the enemy, communicated by an expression allusive of warfare תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לְכָל־אֹיְבֶיךָ and the parallel in the second colon of vs. 9.[179]

Vs. 10: This verse differentiates itself through its tri-colon design which we understand as belonging to the original composition (cf. Psa 18:14). Yahweh, addressed in the vocative at the end of the second colon, puts the enemies as into a fiery furnace, a capital punishment known throughout the ANE (Driver, 1957-58:129; Loretz, 1988a:85). לְעֵת פָּנֶיךָ 'at the time of your appearance' constitutes a theophanic element and is allusive to Psa 18:8-16. Yahweh's arrival is equivalent to the destruction of the enemies.[180] The consumption of the enemies by Yahweh's anger (בְּאַפּוֹ יְבַלְעֵם), which forms a chiasm with the parallel expression תְּאכְלֵם אֵשׁ, indicates their complete destruction through fire. The same imagery has been employed in Psa 18:9.

Vs. 11: The complete annihilation of God's enemies by extinguishing their offspring from the earth is reminiscent of the instruction given for Israelite warfare during the Conquest period (Jos 6:17), and also in the Monarchy (1Sa 15:3). A connection is made to the religious dimension of warfare.[181]

Vs. 12: The focus of attention momentarily shifts to the enemies who are said to have plotted evil devices against Yahweh, though without

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[177] This point has to be evaluated with considerable caution; cf. note 176.

[178] For a summary of other literary features of Psa 21, cf. Auffret (1980:91-93; 1990:385-410) and Watson (1984:204).

[179] "La mention de la 'droite' laisse plutôt supposes un exploit guerrier (Ps *18*, 36; *45*, 5; *89*, 26)" (Beaucamp, 1976:107).

[180] Here we find a possible connection between the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.

[181] Kang investigates the Hebrew חרם 'ban' as a term for utter destruction in Israelite warfare and connects it to the concept of holiness (1989:80-84).

succeeding. It appears that the psalmist here provides a reason for the legitimate destruction of the enemies.

Vs. 13: Two final imageries which are placed alongside each other, without necessarily providing logical coherence, conclude the description of God as warrior: (1) the subduing of the king's enemies through making them turn their shoulder (תְּשִׁיתֵמוֹ שֶׁכֶם), thus exposing them without defense; and (2) aiming with the bowstring which functions as a *pars pro toto* for the weapon[182] against their faces.

The passage in Psa 21:9-13 develops the warrior metaphor in a systematic fashion by assembling the various means of warfare which are at the disposal of Yahweh. The historical dimension of the pericope may reflect the allusion to a battle experienced by the Israelite king in which he experienced Yahweh's protection from his enemies (Dahood, 1966:131; Kuntz, 1987:163).

4.3.4. Psalm 29:3-9

Since the discovery of Ugaritic literature and its comparison with the biblical text, Psa 29 has been linked to a Canaanite background,[183] and, from this perspective, it has served as a paradigm for the examination of Hebrew-Canaanite literary interdependence and thus been the subject of numerous studies.[184] According to our classification, Psa 29 belongs to the

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[182] Cf. Rüterswörden's informative article about Yahweh's rainbow in Gen 9:13 and ancient archery in general. He observes that out of war the reflex bow was not stringed, and that the attaching of the string was the first activity in using the bow for warfare (1988:257). The allusion to the bowstring in our verse might refer to this preparatory activity which precedes the actual shooting.

[183] The exact nature of that relationship has been the subject of wide discussion (see note 184 and the references given there), but Hossfeld now claims a certain consensus which goes back to Loretz's proposition of a twofold Canaanite tradition behind Psa 29: "Mehr und mehr setzt sich die Meinung durch, daß er [Psa 29] sowohl an Überlieferungen zum Götterkönig El wie zum dynamischen Wettergott Baal anknüpft, sie auf seine Weise vermischt und auf JHWH überträgt" (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:180; Loretz, 1984:150-152).

[184] Loretz provides a good summary of the main developments in the history of research for this particular psalm (1984:11-22). For a bibliography of studies dealing with Psa 29 up to 1988, see Loretz (1988b:232-248). For a more recent treatment of the discussion, see Greenstein (1992:49, n. 1). The danger in approaching such a widely debated psalm is that of the reiteration of various viewpoints which normally leads to a mere reshuffling of the evidence. Hence, we will concentrate on the immediate exegesis of the psalter without devoting too much space to the question of Canaanite origin of this psalm.

category of psalms representing primarily the God of heaven metaphor.[185] For the objective of the present study we will limit our discussion to vss. 3-9 which form the central body of the psalm.[186]

4.3.4.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 29:3-9

Psalm 29:3-9	Translation
3a קוֹל יְהוָה עַל־הַמָּיִם	The voice of Yahweh[187] is upon the waters,
3b אֵל־הַכָּבוֹד הִרְעִים	the God of glory thunders,[188]
3c יְהוָה עַל־מַיִם רַבִּים׃	Yahweh is over mighty waters.[189]

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[185] Although Psa 29 is here placed among the psalms representing the God of heaven metaphor, the affinity to the warrior metaphor has been noted by various scholars, e.g., Craigie (1972:148; 1983:245), Gradl (1979:109f.), Greenstein (1992:54), *et al.*

[186] There are various important expressions found in vss. 1-2 and 10-11 which have a significant bearing on the overall interpretation of the psalm, e.g., בני אלים (vs. 1), בהדרת־קדש (vs. 2), and יהוה למבול ישב (vs. 10), and which will be evaluated in the structural analysis of the psalm below. We have nevertheless focused on vss. 3-9, since they constitute the section in which the communication of the God of heaven metaphor forms the central motif.

[187] We follow the interpretation of קול יהוה as a construct chain meaning 'the voice of Yahweh' (Mittmann, 1978:176f.). The understanding of קול as an interjection 'Hark!' has been proposed by various commentators (e.g., Vogt, 1960:17f., n. 1) and is morphologically and syntactically possible, but seems to ignore the importance of Yahweh's קול which appears as a *terminus technicus* in theophanic passages (Deu 5:25; Psa 18:14; 104:7; Joe 4:16). To limit the meaning of קול to 'thunder' (Loretz, 1984:34) creates a logical tension in the interpretation of vss. 5 and 7, and rather has to be understood along the lines of war poetry possibly alluding to a battle cry (Craigie, 1983:246), although the voice of God often is associated with the sound of thunder (Job 37:4,5; 40:9; Psa 29:3; 68:33) and fits the imagery of an approaching thunderstorm. The rendering of the LXX (φωνὴ κυρίου) supports this explanation. Furthermore, the parallel second colons in vss. 3, 5, and 8 have יהוה as the subject which would lead to the conclusion that the קול יהוה is parallel to יהוה and functions as a divine epithet denoting his appearance which is accompanied by a thunderstorm: "Jahwes Stimme ist alldem zufolge ein Organ seines kosmischen Waltens und ist als solches eine sich im Tosen des Gewitters nur besonders machtvoll artikulierende Erscheinungsform Jahwes" (Mittmann, 1978:177; cf. Jeremias, 1965:20).

[188] MT appears to be corrupt here, since the second colon does not fit into the metric structure of the verse. Loretz has aptly summarized the various solutions brought forth (1984:32-34) which either describe the colon as a gloss or a misplaced line (BHS suggests from vs. 7). Any literary consideration based on the structure of vs. 3 has to bear this problem in mind. Whatever the exact position of this colon may be, content-wise it is certainly in tune with the theme of the passage and will thus be retained. With regard to the divine epithet אל־הכבוד, Margulis, in connection with vs. 2, suggests a parallelism of שם and כבוד while the latter one denotes "the concrete and epiphanous Yahweh (as warrior)..." (1970:336f.). The perf. form of the verb רעם has been translated as a present tense, since it denotes a synchronic action. Michel comments on the choice of perf. for such an action: "Das Kriterium für die Wahl des perf. scheint darin zu liegen, daß eine selbstgewichtige Tatsache berichtet wird, die in keinem Abhängigkeitsverhältnis steht" (1960:89).

4a קוֹל־יְהוָה בַּכֹּחַ	The voice of Yahweh with power,
4b קוֹל יְהוָה בֶּהָדָר׃	the voice of Yahweh with majesty. [190]
5a קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר אֲרָזִים	The voice of Yahweh breaks cedars,
5b וַיְשַׁבֵּר יְהוָה אֶת־אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן	yes, Yahweh shatters[191] the cedars of the Lebanon.
6a וַיַּרְקִידֵם כְּמוֹ־עֵגֶל לְבָנוֹן	And[192] he makes[193] Lebanon skip like a calf,
6b וְשִׂרְיֹן כְּמוֹ בֶן־רְאֵמִים׃	and Sirion like a young of an aurochs.[194]
7a קוֹל־יְהוָה חֹצֵב לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ׃	The voice of Yahweh hews out[195] lightning.[196] [197]

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[189] Mythological explanations for מים רבים abound (cf. Loretz, 1984:35; Mittmann, 1978:191), but the chosen imagery is the description of a natural phenomenon, i.e., a thunderstorm forming over the Mediterranean sea (Loretz, 1984:36). Thus מים רבים should first be understood as referring to the Mediterranean, though a certain polyvalence can be observed.

[190] The nomina כח and הדר are attributive to קול and the verse could be translated: 'the voice of Yahweh is powerful, the voice of Yahweh is majestic'.

[191] Some commentators have vocalized שׁבר in 5b as a Piel, but the usage of the same verbal root in Qal and Piel has to be understood along the lines of an intensifying parallelism.

[192] Although this verse does not use the introductory phrase קול יהוה, there is little doubt that it belonged to the original version of the poem, since it describes a motif which clearly belongs to the theophanic event (Exo 19:18) and to the appearance of God as warrior as demonstrated in the exodus experience (Psa 114:4,6). Mittmann (1978:181f.) deletes vs. 6 as a later addition motivated by vs. 8.

[193] The final מ of וירקידם is understood as a *mem*-encliticum known from Ugaritic (Dahood, 1966:178) and not as a personal suffix as MT indicates. Against this notion, see Loretz (1984:40f.), who understands the ם as a later addition which attached vs. 6 to vs. 5.

[194] It is not altogether clear as to which animal ראם refers, but the parallel עגל and a possible Akkadian etymology *rīmu* point to the fact that we are dealing with *bos primigenius*, i.e., the 'wild ox' or 'aurochs' (Committee on Translations, 1972:63).

[195] The meaning of חצב in connection with the 'flames of fire', i.e., lightning is uncertain, since it normally denotes the *terminus technicus* for the activities of hewing of stone, metal, or wood. Greenstein (1992:50-53) has summarized the various solutions: (1) reconstruction of the vs. through the introduction of an appropriate object for חצב on account of haplography; (2) creating a bicolon by proposing homoioteleuton; (3) suggesting a figurative usage for חצב; (4) finding a new meaning for the verb through comparative philology, e.g., 'ignite', 'strike', or 'fashion'. Greenstein himself emendates MT and reads חציו instead of חצב and thus renders vs. 7: "Hark! YHWH - his arrows are flames of fire" (1992:56). As evidence he adduces ANE iconography where arrows and arrow-like weapons are used to indicate lightning (cf. below in chapter 5). Although his observations are correct with regard to the content of vs. 7 and the imagery is that of Yahweh distributing lightning like arrows, the emendation is not easily explicable on text-critical grounds, since the transition from ב to ו, viz., יו is unlikely in early Hebrew. The most likely solution which would take MT into consideration is the figurative use of חצב denoting the effect God's voice has on the mountains, i.e., such an impact that it creates sparks like a firestone, viz., flames of fire (Strauß, 1970:95; Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:184). However, a final decision in this case is difficult to make.

[196] Various commentators insert vs. 3b at the end of vs. 7 creating a bicolon. However, a monocolon in such a position can also be observed in other passages (e.g., Exo 15:18; Psa 92:9). Mittmann observes: "Vor allem an V. 7 entzündet sich die konjekturale

8a קוֹל יְהוָה יָחִיל מִדְבָּר	The voice of Yahweh causes the desert[198] to writhe,[199]
8b יָחִיל יְהוָה מִדְבַּר קָדֵשׁ:	Yahweh causes the desert Kadesh[200] to writhe.[201]
9a קוֹל יְהוָה יְחוֹלֵל אַיָּלוֹת	The voice of Yahweh makes the hinds[202] to bring forth[203]
9b וַיֶּחֱשֹׂף יְעָרוֹת	and lays bare the forests.[204]
9c וּבְהֵיכָלוֹ כֻּלּוֹ אֹמֵר כָּבוֹד:	And in his temple, everyone[205] says: Glory![206]

Phantasie" (1978:179f.), and deletes vs. 7 altogether as an explicative addition, although he accepts the theme of fire as an important part of the theophany.

197 Literally 'flames of fire'. The להבות אש clearly indicate lightning (cf. Psa 18:15; Isa 29:6; 30:30; 66:15; Joe 2:5) which form an integral part of the theophanic event. Against the identification of lightning with the seraphim, see Keel (1977a:80).

198 מדבר denotes the semi-desert, a steppe, a "land without permanent settlements" (Dahood, 1966:178).

199 The understanding of יחיל as a Hiphil and not a Qal is indicated by the context, i.e., Yahweh being the subject of both colons.

200 The identification of מדבר קדש is not clear. If understood in a geographical sense, various identifications are offered: (1) Kadesh on the Orontes (Dahood, 1966:178); (2) the Syrian desert (Ginsberg, 1969:45, n. 2); and (3) the Negev, viz., Sinai region (Strauß, 1970:95f.; Margulis, 1970:341f.). In opposition to the geographical identification, the expression would refer to 'the holy desert', denoting the uninhabited and barren space beyond human control (Craigie, 1983:248). This would be in tune with a more mythological interpretation of Psa 29 (Seybold, 1980:211). We will return to the geographical dimensions of Psa 29 below.

201 BHS suggests with LXX and Peshitta to read ויחיל instead of יחיל.

202 With some hesitancy we follow MT (see note 204). However, BHS suggests a vocalization of אילות as אילות from אלה 'mighty tree, oak'. This would establish the parallelism with the following colon, which repeatedly has been observed throughout the psalm. Dahood maintains the vocalization of MT on account of a similar passage in Job 39:1 (1966:178f.).

203 Observes Mittmann: "Das [i.e., the difficult text of vs. 9] gilt zumindest für das Wort *yhwll*, dem man in Analogie zu *yhyl* V. 8 die kausative Bedeutung 'kreißen lassen' oder 'beben machen' unterschiebt. Demgegenüber ist jedoch mit Nachdruck festzustellen, daß die Intensivstämme dieses Verbs sonst stets 'hervorbringen' (*po'lel*) bzw. 'hervorgebracht werden' (*po'lal*) bedeuten, und zwar im Sinne der Geburt oder der Erzeugung, wobei letzteres auch von Gott ausgesagt werden kann" (1978:185).

204 The fem. plur. of the verb is unusual, thus the BHS suggests a reading of the more common plural יערים instead of יערות. As Mittmann (1978:185-187) correctly observes, it appears that one has to make a choice in vs. 9a and b as to what is intended: a description of the fauna or flora. In its present form, the first nomen refers to animals, while the second nomen indicates a botanical term. One either has to vocalize the first term differently or emendate the second, in order to create parallel terms. A different vocalization is more easily accomplished from a text-critical perspective, unless the psalmist wanted to describe the effect of the divine thunderstorm on both fauna and flora which would correspond to the meaning of the two verbs involved. Margulis presents an altogether different reading of vs. 9: "The voice of Yahweh riles (the Gulf of) Eloth, It unleashes the storms of Teman" (1970:335). This translation is based on a number of

It has become evident that the text of Psa 29:3-9 is in such a state that the translation has to remain provisional, while we have to assume a difficult history of transmission. Especially vss. 3, 7, and 9 create a number of problems which have not been solved in a satisfactory way. While textual emendations, deletions, and relocations abound in the relevant literature, in most cases they have not produced fruitful results.[207] This state of affairs has to be kept in mind with regard to the literary analysis of Psa 29.

4.3.4.2. The Language of Psalm 29:3-9

The repeated use of the expression קוֹל יְהוָה and a concentration of nominal sentences bring the count to ten verbal and forty nominal forms, while especially the nomina are often recurrent in character.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
הִרְעִים	Psa 29:3	רעם	to thunder, roar	A physical event normally accompanying lightning. In poetic literature, especially in theophanic descriptions, the natural phenomenon is associated with the voice of God

emendations (Margulis, 1970:338-342), but is attractive through its geographic allusions. However, it rests on such a variety of textual changes that it approaches dangerously text-critical conjecture.

[205] כלו could be dittography and would fall away, but there is no textual evidence for such an emendation.

[206] Vs. 9c seems strangely detached, since it does not correspond to the content of the preceding vss. in any obvious way. Mittmann assumes a missing preceding stichos for which he adduces vs. 3b (1978:188f.), while Loretz connects the line to vs. 2b (1984:31).

[207] As an example we may take Mittmann's informative article where he sets out to isolate the original form of the poem: "Hinter der heutigen Gestalt muß sich eine Grundform verbergen, und die gegenwärtige Unform kann nur das Ergebnis sekundärer Störungen sein" (1978:173). Thus he eliminates vss. 6 and 7 as later theologically motivated additions, and moves vs. 3b in front of vs. 9. In this way he creates a streamlined Hebrew poem which he describes as a "Musterbeispiel seiner Gattung" (1978:192). However, he is not willing to ignore the eliminated texts altogether, since they seem to incorporate important material relevant for the overall interpretation of the psalm (1978:178-182). This text- and literary-critical ambiguity expresses a certain inconsistency in the approach, a tendency Mittmann himself strongly criticizes (1978:173). In short, Mittmann's approach, which is representative for numerous others, appears to ignore the poetic diversity of Hebrew verse. We would agree with Macholz's criticism: "Mein Widerspruch gegen M. [Mittmann] ist grundsätzlich; er betrifft M.s Prämissen und seinen Ansatz, der die Ergebnisse vorbestimmt: Seine ästhetischen Kategorien scheinen mir der 'hebräischen Poesie' nicht angemessen zu sein ('klassisches Ebenmaß' - ich würde es übrigens eher 'klassizistisch' nennen). Und die 'Gattungen', besonders die der Psalmen, halte ich für (sinnvolle) Abstraktionen, für idealtypische Konstrukte. 'Musterbeispiele' kann man, muß man sich selber herstellen - aber das sind keine 'Ursprungsformen'!" (1980:324, n. 1).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				(Job 34:4-5; Psa 77:18; 104:7).
שֹׁבֵר וַיְשַׁבֵּר	Psa 29:5 Psa 29:5	שׁבר	to break (Qal), shatter (Piel)	Physical action involving a destructive element intended against a physical object (Psa 37:15) or person, viz., body parts (Psa 3:8; 10:15). God is repeatedly described as the breaking agent, especially in defending his people (Psa 46:10; 76:4; Jer 49:35). God breaking trees (Psa 105:33). In the Piel the verb is used in connection with the instructions concerning the destruction of foreign gods (Exo 23:24; 34:13; 2Ki 11:18), but also in theophany (1Ki 19:11).
וַיַּרְקִידֵם	Psa 29:6	רקד	to skip, to make skip (Hiphil)	Verb of motion denoting a non-linear irregular movement of both animate and inanimate objects: dancing people (1Ch 15:29; Job 21:11; Ecc 3:4), bouncing war chariots (Joe 2:5; Nah 3:2). For skipping hills. cf. Psa 114:4-6.
חֹצֵב	Psa 29:7	חצב	to hew out, dig	Verb of motion denoting a physical impact of one object on another. Referring to the activity of mining or stonecutting (Deu 8:9; 1Ki 5:29; 2Ki 12:13; 1Ch 22:15). Figurative usage in poetic and prophetic literature (Job 19:24; Isa 51:1; Hos 6:5).
יָחִיל יָחִיל יְחוֹלֵל	Psa 29:8 Psa 29:8 Psa 29:9	חול	to (cause to) shake (Hiphil), to bring forth (Piel)[208]	A non-linear movement of an object while most of the object's parts remain stationary. The Hiphil is causative and can denote labor pains (Isa 45:10) and writhing in cramps (Eze 30:16). The Polel normally refers to the creative act of God (Psa 90:2) and the act of giving birth (Deu 32:18; Isa 51:2).
וַיֶּחֱשֹׂף	Psa 29:9	חשׂף	to lay bare, to strip off	Verb of motion indicating the removal of an object in order to display another, former hidden, object. Mainly used in prophetic literature, also for the humiliating uncovering of the body (Isa 20:4; 47:2; Jer 13:26; Jer 49:10). The imagery of trees being laid bare is also found in Joe 1:7.
אֹמֵר	Psa 29:9	אמר	to speak	Verb of communication denoting the physical act of speaking.

Table 9: Verbal forms in Psa 29:3-9

The verbal forms of Psa 29:3-9 are almost exclusively verbs of motion with a negative, viz., destructive connotation which is denotative of Yahweh's impressive appearance in a theophanic event. The tempora of the passage exhibit the following distribution: one perf., three impfs. with ו,[209] three

[208] Cf. note 203.

[209] With regard to his dating of the poem, Fensham comments on these forms: "It is quite possible that all the waw consecutive prefix conjugations in this Psalm must be regarded as pure prefix conjugations, because at such an early stage the waw consecutive was not as yet developed (cf. Ugaritic)" (1978:14; cf. also Segert, 1984:103).

impfs., and three participles. The verbal forms seem to have been used with a certain degree of interchangeability and indicate a habitual aspect of time on the whole[210] which is reflected in our translation of the text by using the present tense.[211]

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
קוֹל קוֹל קוֹל קוֹל קוֹל קוֹל קוֹל	Psa 29:3 Psa 29:4 Psa 29:4 Psa 29:5 Psa 29:7 Psa 29:8 Psa 29:9	קוֹל	voice, thunder	Means of communication, audible sound. God's voice is often associated with the sound of thunder (Job 37:4,5; 40:9; Psa 29:3; 68:33). It is not possible to evaluate קוֹל in our psalms detached from the expression קוֹל יהוה which occurs seven times and is often parallel to יהוה. It appears that one cannot limit the expression to the sound of thunder, but can denote the sound of his presence (Gen 3:8), an equivalent to his commandments (Exo 15:26), as accompanying phenomenon of his appearance at Sinai (Deu 5:25; 18:16), and as a means of warfare (Isa 30:31; 66:6). These references point to the fact that a translation of the expression with 'Yahweh's thunder' does not encompass the spectrum of its meaning.[212]
יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה	Psa 29:3 Psa 29:3 Psa 29:4 Psa 29:4 Psa 29:5 Psa 29:5 Psa 29:7 Psa 29:8 Psa 29:8 Psa 29:9	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name; for a semantic evaluation in our context, see under קוֹל. In vss. 3, 5, and 8 it stands in parallel position to קוֹל יהוה.
הַמָּיִם מַיִם	Psa 29:3 Psa 29:3	מַיִם	waters, sea	A natural substance. It can refer to the waters of creation (Gen 1), to rain (2Sa 21:10; Job 26:8), riverwater (Exo 4:9), seawater (Exo 14:21), etc. There is no inherent mythological connotation attached. This observation also refers to the expression מַיִם רַבִּים which is found in the

[210] Cf. especially the usage of the three participles.

[211] For an examination of all verbal forms, cf. Fensham's study in which he comes to the conclusion that the subject of the psalm, i.e., Yahweh, influences the aspect of the tempora (1978:18).

[212] A string search of the expression קול יהוה* with (*) being a wildcard-character, but excluding occurrences with בקול as an idiomatic expression for obedience, resulted in 13 occurrences of which 7 originate in our passage: Gen 3:8; Exo 15:26; Deu 5:25; 18:16; Psa 29:3; 29:4; 29:5; 29:7; 29:8; 29:9; Isa 30:31; 66:6; Mic 6:9.

[213] The expression מים רבים occurs 28 times in the OT, and is mainly used in literal expressions: Num 20:11; 24:7; 2Sa 22:17; 2Ch 32:4; Psa 18:17; 29:3; 32:6; 77:20; 93:4;

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				parallel second colon of the verse.[213] Other than in Psa 18:12, here it apparently refers to the sea, probably the Mediterranean sea.
אֵל	Psa 29:3	אֵל	El, god	Divine name. Most generally used as a generic appellation of the divinity, also of a foreign god or idol (Isa 44:17). Referring to the God of Israel, it is normally qualified with a noun or adjective.[214]
הַכָּבוֹד כָּבוֹד	Psa 29:3 Psa 29:9	כָּבוֹד	glory	Feature of an object. Often occurs as a nomen rectum, thus creating an adjectival aspect. God's glory in the OT can be a visible phenomenon (Exo 33:17), especially in connection with the ark of covenant (Psa 63:3), but it can also refer to an abstract entity associated with the divinity (Psa 29:1).[215]
בַּכֹּחַ	Psa 29:4	כֹּחַ	power, strength	Feature of an object or person. Strength in connection with Yahweh often points to his military superiority and dominion (Exo 15:6; 32:11; 2Ki 17:36; 2Ch 20:6; Nah 1:3).[216]
בֶּהָדָר	Psa 29:4	הָדָר	majesty	Feature of an object or person, expresses a certain abstract quality. Majesty is before God's face (1Ch 16:27), often as a word-pair with הוֹד (Psa 21:6; 45:3; 96:6; 104:1; 111:3), but also in connection with כָּבוֹד (Psa 8:6; 145:5). God's majesty is also associated with his appearance (Isa 2:19-21).
אַרְזִים אַרְזֵי	Psa 29:5 Psa 29:5	אֶרֶז	cedar tree	Plant name referring to a tree growing predominantly in the Lebanon region.
הַלְּבָנוֹן לְבָנוֹן	Psa 29:5 Psa 29:6	לְבָנוֹן	Lebanon	Geographic name of the mountain range constituting the northern border of Israelite territory, famous for its cedar woods. In poetic

107:23; 144:7; Sol 8:7; Isa 17:12; 17:13; Jer 41:12; 51:13; 51:55; Eze 1:24; 17:5; 17:8; 19:10; 27:26; 31:5; 31:7; 31:15; 32:13; 43:2; Hab 3:15.

[214] Observes Rose: "Actually, 'El' is not a divine name but a common Semitic appellative for the 'divinity'.... In order to make appeals to the divinity, this 'El' requires some concrete expression either by being related to a locality (e.g., 'El-Bethel' Gen 35:7), or by adding an epithet (e.g., 'El of the covenant' [El-Berît], Judg 9:46; El-Roi, Gen 16:13; cf. 22:14)" (1992:1004). This leads Scott to the conclusion that "from the beginning of the use of this term [אל] in Scripture, it was intended to distinguish the true El (God) from all false uses of that name found in other semitic cultures" (1980:42). In our text אל is qualified by הכבוד.

[215] Interestingly, a reversed form of our expression (כבוד-אל) is found in Psa 19:2 in the context of creation, but otherwise there is no other occurrence of אל-הכבוד in the OT. With regard to the usage of כבוד in our context, we would agree with Kloos: "The term *kbwd* could not be shown to have any connection with the storm-god (just as it has no special ties with El). The 'glorious god' is god who has to be, and is honoured; cp. vss. 1-2" (1986:60f.).

[216] Nah 1:3 creates an interesting link to the imagery of storm: "The Lord is slow to anger and of great might, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet" (RSV).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				literature references to the Lebanon are usually positive in character (Psa 72:16; 92:13; 104:16).
עֵגֶל	Psa 29:6	עֵגֶל	calf, bull-calf	Animal name.
וְשִׂרְיֹן	Psa 29:6	שִׂרְיֹן	Sirion	Geographic name, Sidonian name for Mt. Hermon (Deu 3:9), one of the highest peaks of the Lebanon mountains (3000 m) on the southern side of the range.
בֶּן	Psa 29:6	בֵּן	son, young	Kinship term, can refer to the offspring of both man and animal and does not necessarily indicate the following generation.
רְאֵמִים	Psa 29:6	רְאֵם	aurochs, wild ochs[217]	Animal name.
לַהֲבוֹת	Psa 29:7	לֶהָבָה	flame	Natural substance, i.e., the burning vapor encompassing an object on fire. For God's punitive actions in war and judgement (Num 21:28; Jer 48:45; Lam 2:3; Eze 21:3); for a designation of lightning (Psa 105:32); for the destructive action of a normal fire (Joe 1:19).
אֵשׁ	Psa 29:7	אֵשׁ	fire	A natural substance, mostly used figuratively in poetic literature for the destructive power of God's anger (Psa 79:5). Often described as flames coming forth from God's mouth as he appears (Psa 29:7; 97:3). In the expression לַהֲבוֹת אֵשׁ it denotes lightning.
מִדְבָּר מִדְבָּר	Psa 29:8 Psa 29:8	מִדְבָּר	desert, semi-desert	Geographical object denoting an uninhabited or sparsely populated region (Job 38:26) with arid conditions (Psa 63:1). In poetic literature often referring to the wilderness experience of the exodus (Psa 95:8; 106:9; 136:16). Wilderness bears a threatening connotation (Lam 4:19).
קָדֵשׁ	Psa 29:8	קָדֵשׁ	Kadesh	Geographic name: it is not altogether clear to which location reference is made here. Cf. note 200 and below.
אַיָּלוֹת	Psa 29:9	אַיָּלָה	hind, deer[218]	Animal name. Job 31:9 presents a similar imagery.
יְעָרוֹת	Psa 29:9	יַעַר	forest	Plant name denoting a dense growth of trees covering a large area.
בְּהֵיכָלוֹ	Psa 29:9	הֵיכָל	temple, palace	Construction object referring to the actual temple in Jerusalem (Psa 5:7; 68:29; 79:1), but also to God's heavenly place of habitation (Psa 11:4). Also the palace of the king (Psa 45:16; Pro 30:28).

Table 10: Nominal forms in Psa 29:3-9

[217] Cf. note 194.

[218] Cf. note 202.

The language of Psa 29:3-9 abounds in naturalistic descriptions, portraying the effects of Yahweh's voice on the various geographic locations and objects, as well as on the plant and animal life.

4.3.4.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 29

Since Ginsberg's hypothesis of a Phoenician origin for Psa 29 in 1935 (1936:180), the interpretation of the proposed Canaanite elements found in this psalm can be organized under the following categories:[219]
(1) Following Ginsberg's line of argument in proposing a northern Phoenician origin for the psalm based on the findings of Ugarit and the literary similarities between the Ugaritic texts and Psa 29, the psalm represents an Israelite adaptation of a Canaanite hymnus to Ba'al indicating foreign elements in the religion of Israel.[220]
(2) Suggesting an Israelite origin for the psalm, while a Canaanite background is accepted.[221]

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[219] One has to immediately qualify this somewhat outdated hypothesis with regard to the fact that the material from Ugarit cannot be equated with Canaanite or Phoenician sources, but constitutes a body of evidence in itself.

[220] There certainly is a spectrum of opinions within this category: Seybold sees Psa 29 as a Canaanite poem in which the psalmist merely substituted Yahweh for Ba'al (1980:212); Greenstein follows Ginsberg's original proposal (1992:49, n. 1); Day tries to establish the relationship between Ba'al's seven thunders and lightnings with Psa 29 (It is hard to follow his identification of Ba'al's lightnings with the biblical seraphim) although there are no formal parallels present (1979:149; cf. also Loretz's critique of Day, 1988b:195-198); Strauß maintains that "nicht nur auf Grund der überall durchschlagenden Einzelbezüge, sondern auch im Gesamten der Vorstellungswelt innerhalb des alten Orients Ps 29 als unmittelbar in v. 3-10 auf einen kanaanäischen Baalhymnus zurückgehend erwiesen [ist], während v. 1f. entsprechende Vorbilder in der Vorstellung vom Gottkönig El inmitten seines himmlischen Thronrates aufweist" (1970:98), while this development took place in Israel; cf. also Dahood who emphasizes that "virtually every word in the psalm can now be duplicated in older Canaanite texts" (1966:175).

[221] This is the most widely held opinion incorporating also a variance of views: Craigie accepts a Canaanite background but questions a Canaanite/Phoenician origin (1983:245), while he tries to establish a continuity between Exo 15 and Psa 29, claiming that the psalm "is a *Hebrew* [his italics] victory hymn, which is probably to be dated in the early part of the United Monarchy" (1972:144); Fensham indicates that Psa 29 "was intended as a missionary poem to make proselites of Canaanites or as an evangelising psalm to convert an apostate Israelite" (1963:96); Gradl endeavors to demonstrate an anti-Canaanite polemic in the employment of Canaanite motifs (1979:109); Macholz suggests that "der Jerusalemer Psalm 29 übernimmt vielleicht einen ganzen jebusitischen Hymnus, jedenfalls aber einen ganzen Traditionskomplex - nicht nur Einzelmotive! -, prägt ihn um und legt ihn als Jahwe-Lob in den Mund Israels" (1980:332); Loretz assumes a long and complicated redaction history and postulates a combination of Ba'al- and El-traditions which took place in post-exilic times with the addition of a "spezifisch israelitisch-jüdische Element ..., das Ps 29 von jeder kanaanäischen Tradition abhebt und zu einem unverwechselbaren Dokument des nachexilischen Jahwismus stempelt" (1984:152; cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:180);

(3) A number of scholars prefer an Israelite origin, while they question the Canaanite background of the psalm altogether, proposing a non-Canaanite background.[222]

One realizes that in answering the question of literary dependency, arguments are heavily influenced by the scholar's respective view of the development of Israelite religion. While an evolutionistic approach finds evidence in favour of various foreign syncretistic traditions and late dates, a more conservative standpoint would likely opt for early dates and interpretations such as 'literary imagery', 'polemics', or 'missionary poem' for Ugaritic elements, as proposed by Gradl, Macholz, Fensham, *et al.*[223]It would be interesting to reinvestigate Ginsberg's almost sixty year old hypothesis in the light of modern scholarship, since the points of contact between Psa 29 and Ugaritic material mentioned by him have to be evaluated differently from a modern perspective.[224]

Taking the condition of the text of Psa 29 into consideration, any structural analysis must remain provisional. However, we would agree with Kloos (1986) against Loretz (1984) in assuming a certain coherence for the poem,[225] excluding the presence of an El-tradition and a Ba'al-tradition alongside each other (Mulder, 1989:135). Furthermore, there are literary devices and structures present in the psalm that would point to a consistent

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Kloos generally opts for a pre-exilic situation for Psa 29, but maintains that the psalm depicts Yahweh in accordance with Ba'al's characteristics, making him an Israelite Ba'al, while she cannot detect any El-traditions in the text. However, she assumes "that the psalm originated in Israel, and that its notions formed part of the Yahwistic creed" (1986:123f.).

222 Although Malamat proposes a relationship between the Ugaritic material and Psa 29, he traces its background further to Mesopotamia, linking it with the Gilgamesh Epic and the Foundation Inscription of Yahdun-Lim, King of Mari (1988:157); Mittmann seems to bypass the question of Canaanite literary dependency altogether, and after deleting the later additions allegedly found in the psalm, comes to the conclusion that Psa 29 belongs to the group of enthronement psalms (1978:192f.).

223 For further references, cf. Kloos' discussion of these interpretations (1986:94-98).

224 It is interesting to note Loretz's conclusion in the update on his monograph *Psalm 29. Kanaanäische El- und Baaltraditionen in jüdischer Sicht* (1984) about the relationship between the psalm and Ugaritic literature: "... es zeigte sich zunehmend, daß zwischen den ugaritischen Texten und Ps 29 doch so zahlreiche Differenzen bestehen, die eine kanaanistische Interpretation als falsch erweisen" (1988b:232). Furthermore he no longer upholds the combination of El- and Ba'al-traditions and excludes an imagery of Ba'al in Psa 29 (1988b:195).

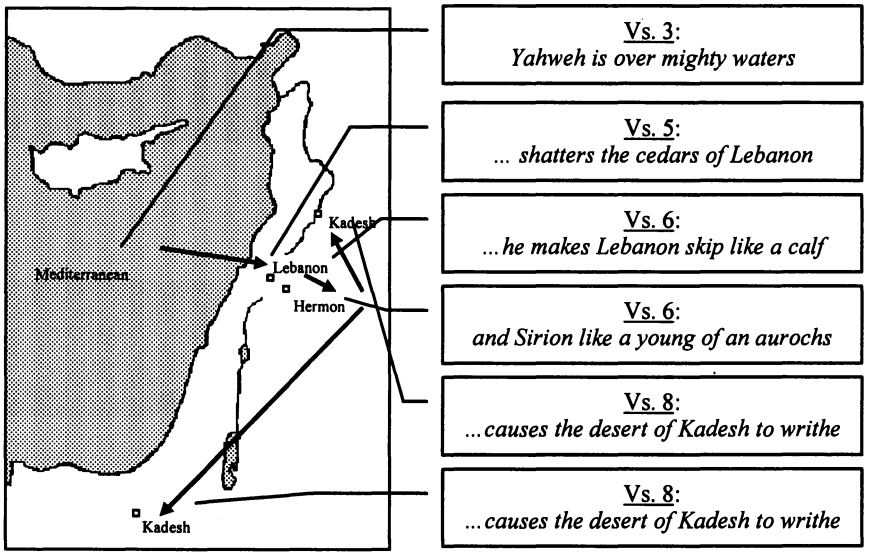
225 Freedman and Hyland try to demonstrate "the integrity of the present text" through a structural analysis of Psa 29 which is aimed at literary features, strophic patterns, syllable counts, grammatical peculiarities, etc. Thus the authors come to the following conclusion: "We may be confident that we have the hymn substantially as it was composed for liturgical use in early Israel" (1973:256).

thought pattern applied to the whole of the poem.[226] The text of Psa 29 has a threefold structure (vss. 1-2; vss. 3-9b; vss. 9c-11) with a chiastic structure of division 1 and 3 as shown convincingly by Auffret:

A	(1a)	Partenaires = fils des dieux		
		B	(1b-2a)	Acclamations = gloire et force!
	+	C	(2b)	Attitude = prosternement (des fils de dieux)
		....		.....
		B'	(9c)	Acclamation = gloire!
	+	C'	(10)	Attitude = assis (Yahvé)
A'	(11)	Partenairs = son peuple (à lui la force)		

(Auffret, 1987:92)

The central division coincides with the textual unit chosen for the purpose of the present study, and the eminent structural feature of the passage is found in the spatial dimensions mentioned in the text. As observed before in Psa 18, a definite dynamic movement takes place in the psalmist's description of the theophanic thunderstorm which is not only reflected in the geographic terms, but also in the choice of motion-oriented language.[227]



Graph 9: Geographical dimensions in Psa 29:3-9

The geographic dimensions shown in **Graph 9** evidently describe the movement of the thunderstorm from the Mediterranean toward the coast and further inland. The first two toponomies represent few problems.[228]

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[226] Cf. the index in Watson (1984:420).

[227] A substructure describing the effects of the theophanic thunderstorm, can be detected in vss. 5-9a which forms a concentric ring-composition around vs. 7 with the sequence ABCBA; cf. below note 235.

[228] Note the parallelism between Mt. Lebanon and Mt. Sirion/Hermon.

However, the identification of Kadesh, or the 'semi-desert Kadesh', has been the subject of wide discussion, since it could refer to a desert area close to Kadesh on the Orontes, as well as to the arid region in the Southern Negev, close to Kadesh Barnea.[229] While one cannot rule out an underlying figurative meaning for the geographic allusions, it seems nevertheless clear that, in the poet's description of the thunderstorm, they follow a geographical progressive pattern, and do not serve as a mythological depiction of the Yahwistic thunderstorm in general (cf. Seybold, 1980:211). Interestingly, in vs. 10 the psalmist returns to the imagery of water which served as a point of departure in vs. 3.[230]

4.3.4.4. Comment on Psalm 29:3-9

After a call to praise directed toward the בְּנֵי אֵלִים[231] in vss. 1-2, the psalmist begins his description of the thunderstorm in vs. 3.

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[229] In the current literature, a distinction is being made between a north- and a south-solution. For a northern topography the mentioning of Mt. Lebanon and Mt. Sirion and the progression of the thunderstorm from the Mediterranean over the mountains toward the adjoining desert can be adduced (Craigie, 1983:247). Notably, a northern geography is proposed by adherents to a Canaanite origin for the poem (cf. note 220), while a southern identification of Kadesh is generally followed by proponents of an Israelite origin for Psa 29 (cf. notes 221 and 222). A southern locale seems attractive from its inclusive character by creating the circumference of Israel in mentioning its northern and southern horizons: "Libanon und Kadeswüste liegen offenbar im Horizont des Landes, in dem der Dichter des Psalms zu Hause ist" (Mittmann, 1978:184). Furthermore it solves the problem that Kadesh on the Orontes is not located in a semi-desert region, and was not occupied between ca. 1200 B.C. and Seleucid times: "... the invasion of the Sea Peoples ca. 1200 seems to have ended the historical record of Kadesh, and it remained unoccupied until a city named Laodicea was built on the remains during the Seleucid era" (Avalos, 1992b:4). Nevertheless, one cannot rule out a more mythological interpretation of the expression altogether (cf. note 200). Taking the overall geographical imagery into account, the northern geography seems more likely, whereas the geographical allusion may have served as a basis for an underlying mythological meaning.

[230] The מבול in vs. 10 has been the subject of various discussions. Although it has been understood as a parallel to the motif of Ba'al sitting enthroned above the flood (Craigie, 1983:248), Loretz argues that the proposed parallels with Ugaritic texts do not withstand further scrutiny (1987:421), and that "*mbwl* 'Himmelsozean' ein Wort aus dem gewöhnlichen Sprachgebrauch hebräischer Kosmologie ist" (1988b:177). Furthermore, besides Psa 29:10, it only occurs in Gen 6-11 (12 times) in connection with the flood account denoting the 'flood', and that seems to be the background which the psalmist had foremost in mind. Cf. also Tsumura who proposes an interesting temporal interpretation of למבול meaning 'since before the deluge' (1988:354f.).

[231] The identity of the בני אלים is not altogether clear. It constitutes one of the major points of evidence adduced for support of a Canaanite origin, supposedly denoting the Canaanite pantheon. For a thorough discussion of the opposite view of the matter, cf. Loretz (1988b:154-158) who argues against a direct relationship between the Hebrew

Vs. 3: As mentioned above the קוֹל יְהוָה refers to the approaching sound of thunder heard by the psalmist from a distance, but it goes beyond that in announcing Yahweh's presence with an element of theophany and warfare (Deu 5:25; Isa 30:31). The imminent thunderstorm is described as coming in from the Mediterranean, the מַיִם רַבִּים.[232] Beyond a mere naturalistic description, vs. 3 has been seen as an allusion to Yahweh's supremacy over chaos as represented by the 'mighty waters',[233] a theme which is prevalent throughout the ANE and not exclusively Ugaritic. The mentioning of אֵל־הַכָּבוֹד 'God of glory', i.e., the generic term אֵל in connection with a qualifier, and furthermore in parallel position to יְהוָה, points to the fact that the expression was used as a divine epithet of Yahweh and cannot be seen as evidence for a separate El-tradition in Psa 29.

Vs. 4: The psalmist continues the description of Yahweh's voice in a nominal sentence and attaches to it the attributes of כֹּחַ 'power' and הָדָר 'majesty' which are ultimately to be ascribed to Yahweh.[234]

Vs. 5: As the thunderstorm moves inland over the Lebanon mountain range, its destructive effects are starting to show.[235] Yahweh's voice 'breaks' and, in an intensified parallelism, 'shatters' the אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן 'cedars of Lebanon' which play a significant role in Israelite, but also Canaanite literature and,

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and Ugaritic parallel expressions, and understands the phrase as a post-exilic term for 'angels'.

[232] A climatic description of the wet season in Palestine supports the description of a thunderstorm reaching Palestine from the Mediterranean: "The wet season occurs when low pressure storm tracks over Europe are displaced more southward during the winter months. During this season, cyclonic storms move eastward through to the Mediterranean. Precipitation occurs mainly in the form of showers caused by the unstable air of the intruding cold fronts" (Raphael, 1992:970).

[233] Cf. Görg's recent article about the forces of chaos in the OT in which he discusses various texts describing the *Chaoskampf* (1993:48-61). However, there is no indication of a mythological content in the text itself, and vs. 3 is foremost a description of the thunderstorm approaching from the West.

[234] Dahood understands the preposition ב preceding both nouns as an emphasizing article (1966:177).

[235] Hossfeld sees vss. 5-9a as a concentric ring-composition around vs. 7: vss. 5 and 9a show the effect of the thunderstorm on the vegetation, while vss. 6 and 8 describe the impact of an accompanying earthquake. The center is formed by vs. 7 describing the most dangerous effect of Yahweh's voice, i.e., the lightning and fire imagery. In this sequence he recognizes a feature of the theophany: "Typisch für sie [theophanies] sind die Dramatik des Vorgangs (die sich steigernde Trias von Sturm - Beben - Feuer vgl. 1 Kön 19[11f]), die nordpalästinensische Geographie (Libanon, Antilibanon und Ostwüste) und vor allem die mythischen Anspielungen bzw. Wurzeln der Bilder" (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:184; cf. also Macholz, 1980:329).

in a figurative sense, symbolize strength and stability (Job 40:17; Psa 80:11; Sol 5:15).[236]

Vs. 6: The imagery of skipping mountains serves to describe the intensified results of the thunderstorm as it continues to stay over the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon[237] regions. Yahweh's voice, denotative of his presence, causes an earthquake-like effect on the topography of the area, an imagery also portrayed in Psa 114:4-6. It becomes once more apparent that the poet transcends the mere naturalistic description of a thunderstorm over northern Palestine.[238]

Vs. 7: The monocolon describes the force of Yahweh's voice on the rocky surface, and invokes the imagery of lightning and fire as part of the divine thunderstorm which is an integral feature of the theophany and reminiscent of the warrior imagery.[239]

Vs. 8: The thunderstorm now moves on into the semi-desert Kadesh,[240] while the exact identification of the location remains uncertain.[241] It appears that the poet intended to describe the dynamic movement and impact of the divine voice by means of it featuring in various geographic regions.

Vs. 9: As a final effect of Yahweh's voice, its impact on the fauna and flora is demonstrated. The decision for the present translation is motivated by the choice of language, especially the verbal forms יְחוֹלֵל and וַיֶּחֱשֹׂף which promote a differentiation between the animal and plant world. While it is correct that the upheaval of the fauna does not constitute a feature of the theophany elsewhere (Mittmann, 1978:187), it occurs in our passage in the form of the comparisons in vs. 6. The verse concludes with a somewhat sudden return to praise.

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[236] Cf. a Ugaritic text in which Ba'al is described as felling the cedars (no mention of Lebanon, though) not by his voice, but with his right hand (KTU 1.4:vii.40; de Moor, 1987:64).

[237] The usage of the Sidonian name שִׂרְיֹן for Mt. Hermon would facilitate the suspicion that the author of the psalm followed a certain polemic purpose with his geographic description.

[238] Craigie argues against a Canaanite textual background for the toponomy of the passage, but nevertheless assumes a polemic intention behind the imagery: "The language here is not drawn from Canaanite (Phoenician or Ugaritic) texts, but takes Canaanite symbols of stability and mocks them through a demonstration of their instability in the context of the Lord's thundering voice" (1983:247).

[239] Cf. our remarks to Psa 18:15.

[240] We would favour a geographic interpretation of מִדְבַּר קָדֵשׁ over mythological or figurative explanations.

[241] The northern locale remains the most probable one, although there certainly is a case for the southern solution as well (cf. remarks above).

While the notion is correct that the motifs employed in Psa 29:3-9 find their counterparts in extra-biblical literature and iconography, caution should nevertheless be expressed against an overly simplistic interpretation of that evidence. It appears that the Ugaritic parallels regarded from the perspective of recent biblical scholarship do not present such a strong case for a Phoenician origin of Psa 29 as when Ginsberg formulated his hypothesis in 1935.[242] It would then seem possible that the author used imagery commonly known from its general Palestinian background,[243] but that he reworked it accordingly and filled it with a new content. The divergences from original Canaanite motifs found in the text seem to be of a sufficient weight to suppose such a procedure. Whether the purpose of such an intentional adaptation was of a polemic, ironic, or proselytizing nature, cannot be answered with certainty.[244]

As a final point in the discussion of this complex psalm, reference should be made to its classification as a text presenting primarily the God of heaven metaphor. The exegesis of the passage has made it clear once again that the differentiating line between the God of heaven and the warrior metaphor is a fine one, and that the imagery of the poem bears features of Hebrew war poetry combined with theophanic elements depicting the God of heaven.[245]

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[242] A good example is מבול in Psa 29:10; cf. note 230.

[243] E.g., the thunderstorm theophany as known from the Canaanite Ba'al-Hadad (Macholz, 1980:329; Keel, 1972:192).

[244] Mouhanna supports the notion of a polemic content for various psalms in his article, stating that the audience for which some of the psalms were intended, were both foreigners and Israelites who were tempted to abandon Yahwism (1996: 161-171).

[245] Craigie observes: "Thus the language of storm and theophany in Psalm xxix is initially language used to describe Yahweh's prowess in battle" (1972:148). He continues to establish that the "Canaanite aspects of the psalm are partly to be understood as a continuation of the Canaanite motifs in the Song of the Sea [Exo 15], and partly to be understood as a deliberate use of Canaanite language in a sarcastic taunt against the defeated Canaanite foe" (1948:145). This brings us to the question of dating which we have neglected up to this point, since the psalm does not easily fit into any dating scheme. Adherents of the Ugaritic model normally date the psalm to the 12th century B.C. (Freedman, 1976:56), while a post-exilic date, based on a complex redactional development of the text, is also taken into consideration (Loretz, 1988b:150f.). While we have observed that the Ugaritic parallels are often inconclusive, we could nevertheless notice a certain coherence in the text of the psalm. From the close similarities to the imagery employed in Psa 18, we would thus propose a tentative date for the psalm within the early monarchic period, i.e., the 10th or 9th century B.C.

4.3.5. Psalm 46:7-12

Psa 46 has been categorized as an eschatological *Zionslied* (Gunkel, 1975:81), centering around the interpretation of vs. 5 which describes the city of God, although the psalm possesses distinct features which differ from the remainder of the Songs of Zion (Psa 48, 76, 84, 87, and 122).[246] For the purpose of the present study, we will bypass the issue of Zion theology normally discussed in connection with this psalm,[247] and focus on the warrior imagery presented in vss. 7-12.[248]

4.3.5.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 46:7-12

Psalm 46:7-12	Translation
7a הָמוּ גוֹיִם מָטוּ מַמְלָכוֹת	Nations raged, kingdoms slipped -
7b נָתַן בְּקוֹלוֹ תָּמוֹג אָרֶץ׃	he raised his voice:[249] the earth[250] melted![251]
8a יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ	Yahweh of hosts (is) with us,
8b מִשְׂגָּב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֶלָה	a stronghold for us (is) the God of Jacob - Selah![252]

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[246] "But whereas there are clear similarities between Ps 46 and the Songs of Zion, there are also grave problems with such a classification of the form. The implied association with Zion is to be found in v 5, with the reference to the 'city of God' and the 'holy dwelling place'; nevertheless, the psalm differs from the clearly established Songs of Zion in that it contains no explicit references to either Zion or Jerusalem" (Craigie, 1983:342). Spieckermann, in his recent article on the city of God in the ANE and OT also expresses hesitation in calling Psa 46 a Song of Zion: "Doch auch Ps 46 einen Zionspsalm zu nennen, heißt, der fehlenden Erwähnung des Zion oder des heiligen Berges keine Bedeutung beizumessen. Man gewinnt in Ps 46 jedoch nicht den Eindruck, die Erwähnung des Zion(berges) sei nur unbeabsichtigt unterblieben" (1992:27).

[247] For a short introduction to Zion theology and the relevant literature, see van Gemeren (1991:354-357), who emphasizes its affinity to the depiction of Yahweh as warrior: "At the center of Zion theology is Yahweh, the Divine Warrior-King, whose kingdom extends to all creation ... but especially to his children" (1991:354).

[248] The interpretation of the psalm is often dominated by vs. 5 and neglects the interesting presentation of the warrior metaphor found in vss. 7-12. Furthermore, although vss. 3-4 of the psalm clearly exhibit theophanic elements, there is no explicit reference to Yahweh being the cause of such a turmoil of nature: "Elsewhere in the OT the shaking, trembling, or melting of *'ereṣ* and the mountains appear to be caused by a theophany, whereas in Ps 46 their tumult is more naturally associated with the chaotic antagonism of the waters" (Kelly, 1970:306). Thus we have concentrated on the interpretation of vss. 7-12.

[249] Two mss. omit the preposition ב before קול possibly because the expected על does not follow in the expression (e.g., Jer 12:8).

[250] Many mss and the Greek translation add the article before ארץ.

[251] The change from perf. to impf. anounces a consequence, a resulting action, not a different tense (Michel, 1960:75, §8, 19).

[252] Missing in the Syrian translation.

9a לְכוּ־חֲזוּ מִפְעֲלוֹת יְהוָה	Come! - behold the works of Yahweh[253]
9b אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם שַׁמּוֹת בָּאָרֶץ:	who[254] establishes[255] terrifying events[256] on the earth.
10a מַשְׁבִּית מִלְחָמוֹת עַד־קְצֵה הָאָרֶץ	Who causes wars to cease to the end of the earth;
10b קֶשֶׁת יְשַׁבֵּר וְקִצֵּץ חֲנִית	the bow he shatters, he cuts in pieces the spear,
10c עֲגָלוֹת יִשְׂרֹף בָּאֵשׁ:	wagons[257] he burns with fire.
11a הַרְפּוּ וּדְעוּ כִּי־אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים	Let go! - and acknowledge that I am God.
11b אָרוּם בַּגּוֹיִם אָרוּם בָּאָרֶץ:	I am[258] exalted among the nations, I am exalted on the earth.
12a יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ	Yahweh of hosts (is) with us,
12b מִשְׂגָּב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֶלָה:	a stronghold for us (is) the God of Jacob - Selah![259]

The text of Psa 46:7-12 is in a good condition and does not present major difficulties in the rendering of the passage.

4.3.5.2. The Language of Psalm 46:7-12

The language employed in Psa 46:7-12 has been described as being "distinctively Hebrew" (Craigie, 1983:342), but nevertheless with a universal character (Weiss, 1961:299f.). Before such statements can be evaluated adequately, attention should be given to the actual terminology used which statistically consists of 15 verbal and 28 nominal forms.

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253 Many Hebrew mss, the Greek (Codex Alexandrinus and the Lucian recension) and the Syrian translations replace יהוה with אלהים (cf. Psa 66:5). The expression does not occur elsewhere except for Psa 46:9 and 66:5.

254 The point of reference for אשר is יהוה and not מפעלות.

255 For the use of the perf. in a relative clause with attributive character, see Michel (1960:196, §31, 21). שם could also be understood as a Qal participle which, however, would not alter our translation.

256 Dahood assumes שמות to be an antonym to מלחמות in vs. 10, and thus identifies it with Ugaritic *šmt* 'fat, oil' which results in the reading 'who has put fertility in the earth' for vs. 9b (1966:281; cf. also Schweizer, 1986:111). There is, however, no compelling reason to disregard MT in this instance and to expect in this vs. an antithesis to vs. 10. Furthermore, שמות may also indicate an event that causes terrified wonder and astonishment, a meaning that is supported by the Greek translation τέρατα 'wonder, object of wonder, omen', and fits the context adequately.

257 BHS suggests to read ועגלות 'circular shield' which corresponds to the LXX translation θυρεοὺς 'shield' (cf. also the Targumim). This vocalization is motivated by the context which describes pieces of weaponry. However, עגלה refers to a cart, wagon, or chariot which formed an integral part of the ANE war machinery in transporting supplies or serving as a mobile attack platform (Fretz, 1992:894).

258 The impfs. following the anouncement of Yahweh אנכי אלהים denote a synchronic action, characterizing the expressions ארום בגוים ארום בארץ as qualifying attributes of Yahweh (Weiss, 1961:298).

259 Missing in the Syrian and Greek translations.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
הָמוּ	Psa 46:7	המה	to rage, roar	Verb of motion denoting an extreme state of anger or upheaval, referring to both people and objects. It usually is associated with a physical audible sound. Parallel to Psa 46:7 is 46:4 where waters are roaring (cf. Jer 5:22). People are roaring (Psa 49:15), in connection with warfare the enemies and nations are roaring/raging (Psa 83:3; Isa 17:12), a lion roars (Pro 20:2).
מָטוּ	Psa 46:7	מוט	to slip, shake, totter	Verb of linear movement, denoting the loss of a secure stand and the resulting motion. Often used with a negative particle to denote stability (1Ch 16:30; Psa 17:5; 21:7; 104:5). Appears three times in Psa 46 referring to mountains (vs. 3; Isa 54:10), the city of God (vs. 6), and kingdoms (vs. 7). Also as a result of Yahweh's actions of judgement (Deu 32:35; Isa 24:19).
נָתַן	Psa 46:7	נתן	to give	Denoting a transferal of an entity to a recipient on account of the initiative of the giving entity. Here, נתן is part of an expression in connection with קוֹל (cf. Joe 2:11; Hab 3:10).
תָּמוֹג	Psa 46:7	מוג	to melt, faint	Feature of an object resulting from an event (here: Yahweh's voice) denoting the state of becoming liquid or soft. God softens the soil with rain (Psa 65:11). Mostly used figuratively where it refers to fear (Exo 15:15; Jos 2:9; Psa 107:26; Isa 14:31; Jer 49:23). Parallel to our text describing the earth melting away: Psa 75:4; Amo 9:5.
לְכוּ	Psa 46:9	הלך	to go, come, walk	Verb of linear movement, effecting a change of location (a rather generic meaning). As an imperative at the beginning of a phrase, the verb is reduced to an interjection with an appellative character, often followed by another verb, especially a verb denoting a sensory event (Psa 34:12; 66:5; Pro 9:5). [260]
חֲזוּ	Psa 46:9	חזה	to see, behold	A sensory event. The verb usually denotes the seeing of something done by or associated with God (Exo 24:11; Num 24:4; Job 19:26; Psa 11:7; 63:2; Isa 1:1; 13:1). As an imperative it only occurs in Isa in connection with prophetic vision (Isa 30:10; 33:20; 48:6).
שָׂם	Psa 46:9	שׂים	to make, put, set, establish	Denoting a state of existence or the becoming of a state (a highly generic term). Referring to God's deeds in prophetic literature (Job 19:5; 78:43).
מַשְׁבִּית	Psa 46:10	שׁבת	to rest, cease, cause to cease	Denoting a state of existence or the becoming of a state, i.e., the termination of an action or state. As a Hiphil it often refers to God's judgements, especially in prophetic literature (Isa 13:11; Jer 48:35; Eze 16:41; 30:10; Hos 1:4; 2:13).

[260] Such an asyndetic construction is often found together with an imperative of הלך (Joüon, 1991:650f., §177, e; f).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
			(Hiphil)	
יְשַׁבֵּר	Psa 46:10	שׁבר	to break (Qal), to shatter (Piel)	Physical action involving a destructive and violent element intended against an object (Psa 37:15; Ecc 12:6) or person, viz., body parts (Psa 3:8; 10:15). God is repeatedly described as the breaking agent, especially in defending his people (Psa 46:10; 76:4; Jer 49:35). God breaking trees (Psa 105:33). In the Piel the verb is often used in connection with instructions for the destruction of foreign gods (Exo 23:24; 34:13; Deu 7:5; 2Ki 11:18), but also in theophany (1Ki 19:11).
וְקִצֵּץ	Psa 46:10	קצץ	to cut off, cut in pieces (Piel)	Denoting a physical impact on another object with a destructive intention, usually with a sharp instrument (Exo 39:3; 2Ki 24:13). Cutting of body parts as a form of punishment (Deu 25:12; Jdg 1:6).
יִשְׂרֹף	Psa 46:10	שׂרף	to burn	Physical event or state, describing the process of destruction by fire. In connection with בָּאֵשׁ the expression serves as a terminus technicus for utter destruction (Jdg 15:6; 1Sa 30:1), but especially for the purification of objects and people as ordained by God.[261] Burning of chariots with fire (Jos 11:6,9).
הַרְפּוּ	Psa 46:11	רפה	relax, be quiet, let go, drop (Hiphil)	Referring to the discontinuation of an action (Psa 37:8), letting go of an object or person (Job 12:21; Pro 4:13; Sol 3:4), also: refraining from speaking (1Sa 15:16). The imagery of dropping hands from an intended action is used (Jos 10:6; 2Sa 24:26).
וּדְעוּ	Psa 46:11	ידע	to know, acknowledge	Cognitive act of understanding a certain predicament or situation (Jdg 18:14; 1Sa 12:17; 2Ki 10:10; Isa 33:13).[262]
אָרוּם אָרוּם	Psa 46:11 Psa 46:11	רום	to rise, be high/ exalted	Verb of linear movement denoting an upward motion. Figuratively, a position of honour (Psa 18:48).

Table 11: Verbal forms in Psa 46:7-12

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[261] A search of the expression "באש AND *שׂרף*" (i.e., occurring within the same verse) reveals that it appears 68 times in the OT: Exo 12:10; 29:14; 29:34; 32:20; Lev 4:12; 6:23; 7:17; 7:19; 8:17; 8:32; 9:11; 13:52; 13:55; 13:57; 16:27; 19:6; 20:14; 21:9; Num 31:10; Deu 7:5; 7:25; 9:21; 12:3; 12:31; 13:17; Jos 6:24; 7:15; 7:25; 11:6; 11:9; 11:11; Jdg 9:52; 12:1; 14:15; 15:6; 18:27; 1Sa 30:1; 30:14; 1Ki 9:16; 16:18; 2Ki 17:31; 23:11; 25:9; 1Ch 14:12; 2Ch 36:19; Psa 46:10; 80:17; Isa 33:12; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 21:10; 32:29; 34:2; 34:22; 36:32; 37:8; 37:10; 38:17; 38:18; 38:23; 39:8; 43:13; 51:32; 52:13; Eze 5:4; 16:41; 23:47; Mic 1:7. Unclean and other objects, sacrifices, people, enemies, cities in warfare, foreign gods are burnt with fire. A connotation of holiness is often connected with the expression, i.e., objects or people in opposition to Yahweh are burnt with fire.

[262] Weiss observes with regard to the expression הרפו ודעו: "Die zwei Imperative sind nicht ein parallel ausgerichtetes Paar, ... sondern sind antithetisch, das erste fordert eine Abwendung von, das zweite eine Hinwendung zu" (1961:296).

The verbal forms of Psa 46:7-12 incorporate a motion-oriented language with a number of intensified verbal moods communicating destructive connotations which vividly portray the warrior metaphor. The imperative-pairs at the beginning of vss. 9 and 11 create a dialogue between the author of the psalm and his projected audience.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
גּוֹיִם בַּגּוֹיִם	Psa 46:7 Psa 46:11	גּוֹי	nation, people	Referring to a group or class of persons and the members thereof. Mostly non-Hebrew people are identified as גּוֹיִם (Psa 18:43; 44:14). Also as a generic term for all the people (Psa 22:28), especially in submission to God (Psa 47:9; 72:11). God punishes the nations, i.e., the enemies of Israel (Psa 59:6; 78:55).
מַמְלָכוֹת	Psa 46:7	מַמְלָכָה	kingdom, realm, dominion	Geographical unit referring to an entity united under one rule (Jos 11:10; 1Ki 5:1; Isa 13:19; 23:11). The term is parallel to 'nations' (cf. Psa 79:6; 105:13) and thus refers to non-Hebrew people in this case.
בְּקוֹלוֹ	Psa 46:7	קוֹל	voice	Means of communication, audible sound. God's voice is often associated with the sound of thunder (Job 37:4,5; 40:9; Psa 29:3; 68:33). It appears that one cannot limit the expression to the sound of thunder, but it can denote the sound of his presence (Gen 3:8), an equivalent to his commandments (Exo 15:26), as accompanying phenomenon of his appearance at Sinai (Deu 5:25; 18:16), and as a means of warfare (Isa 30:31; 66:6) which comes closest to the usage in the context of Psa 46.
אֶרֶץ בָּאָרֶץ הָאָרֶץ בָּאָרֶץ	Psa 46:7 Psa 46:9 Psa 46:10 Psa 46:11	אֶרֶץ	earth	Geographical object, denoting the habitat of humanity (e.g., Psa 33:8), also the nether world (Exo 15:12). In our context it refers to the inhabited world. It becomes apparent that אֶרֶץ serves as a central term in the language of the psalm (five times); it appears four out of the total five times in our passage (cf. below).
יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה	Psa 46:8 Psa 46:9 Psa 46:12	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name.
צְבָאוֹת צְבָאוֹת	Psa 46:8 Psa 46:12	צָבָא	army, host	Military term referring to a large organized group of soldiers (Psa 44:10; 60:12). Can also designate an association of objects or persons, e.g., stars (Psa 33:6), also angels (Psa 68:11; 103:21; 148:2). But mostly used as a divine

[263] The phrase יהוה צבאות as a divine epithet does not appear in the Pentateuch, and only starts to feature more frequently in 1Sa. Comments Freedman on the origin of the expression: "According to repeated testimony, it [יהוה צבאות] was part of the legend on the ark (cf. I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2), and there is little reason to doubt that this was the

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				epithet (Psa 24:10; 48:9; 59:6; 80:15).[263]
מִשְׂגָּב מִשְׂגָּב	Psa 46:8 Psa 46:12	מִשְׂגָּב	strong-hold, refuge	Construction object referring to a fortified structure for defending purposes (Psa 48:3). Appears almost exclusively in the psalms (except Isa 25:12; 33:16; Jer 48:1), and often serves as a qualifying noun for Yahweh (Psa 18:3 = 2Sa 22:3; Psa 144:2) with a connotation of protection and security (Psa 59:17; 94:22).
אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי	Psa 46:8 Psa 46:11 Psa 46:12	אֱלֹהִים	god, Elohim	Divine name, but also generic term for the designation of the divinity. In a construct chain with the proper name Jacob it appears 15 times in the OT in which it generally denotes 'God of Jacob' parallel to 'God' as an independent noun (Psa 81:12). The plural form "should be understood as an intensification" (Rose, 1992:1006) and stands in parallel position to the expression 'Yahweh of hosts'.
יַעֲקֹב יַעֲקֹב	Psa 46:8 Psa 46:12	יַעֲקֹב	Jacob	Personal name. As nomen rectum in a construct chain with 'God' the name refers to the patriarchal covenant traditions of Israel (Exo 3:6,15; 4:5).
מִפְעָלוֹת	Psa 46:9	מִפְעָלָה	work, thing	Result of someone's activity. The term only appears in a similar context in Psa 66:5.
שַׁמּוֹת	Psa 46:9	שַׁמָּה	desolation, astonish-ment	A harmful event causing terrified astonishment. In the plural form it only occurs in this verse.[264] As a singular noun it often denotes destructive events associated with God's judgements, especially in prophetic literature (Isa 13:9; Jer 25:9; 44:12; Eze 23:33; Hos 5:9; Zec 7:14).
מִלְחָמוֹת	Psa 46:10	מִלְחָמָה	battle, war	Military activity of engaging in warfare and fighting an enemy. Yahweh is associated with battle (Psa 24:8). In Psa 76:4 a similar imagery of God putting an end to battle is described.
קְצֵה	Psa 46:10	קָצֶה	end, border	Spatial term, denoting a limit as the distant end of a space (Job 26:14; 28:24), e.g., border of a country (Num 33:37). In poetic literature in connection with אֶרֶץ it is a standard expression referring to the whole of the earth (Psa 61:3; 135:7; Pro 17:24).

original locus of the expression in pre-monarchic times" (1976:98). Thus the proximity to the warrior metaphor becomes evident: "The premonarchical Israelite traditions which interpret the ark as a war palladium upon which the god of Israel was enthroned and from which he led the armies of Israel make explicit the association of the epithet 'Lord of Hosts' with the ark and with its military functions (1 Sam 17:45). The warrior imagery of the Lord of the heavenly armies, marching victoriously from war over his enemies, is clearly portrayed in Ps 24:8,10 where 'Yahweh of Hosts,' 'Yahweh strong and mighty,' the 'mighty warrior,' the 'king of glory,' is praised" (Mullen, 1992:303). This divine epithet is clearly favoured in prophetic literature (except in Eze where it does not occur at all), since 224 of 247 total hits of a string search of the expression stem from prophetic books.

[264] Eze 36:3 seems to be a Qal inf. constr.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
קֶשֶׁת	Psa 46:10	קֶשֶׁת	bow	Military and hunting weapon. Artifact for shooting arrows (1Ki 22:34; 2Ki 9:24; Isa 5:28), also denoting the rainbow (Gen 9:13). Figuratively, the bow stands for might (1Sa 2:4).
חֲנִית	Psa 46:10	חֲנִית	spear	Military weapon, indicating the spear used for thrusting at the enemy in short distance fighting, and not the javelin which was thrown (Fretz, 1992:894).
עֲגָלוֹת	Psa 46:10	עֲגָלָה	wagon, cart	Vehicle used for transporting goods and persons (Gen 45:19-27), but also for military purposes (cf. note 257).
בָּאֵשׁ	Psa 46:10	אֵשׁ	fire	A natural substance, mostly used figuratively in poetic literature for the destructive power of God's anger (Psa 79:5). Often described as flames coming forth from God's mouth as he appears (Psa 29:7; 97:3). In our context it refers to the purifying properties of Yahweh's actions of judgement. Cf. our remarks for the verb שׂרף.

Table 12: Nominal forms in Psa 46:7-12

An examination of the language of Psa 46:7-12 shows that a distinct underlying Hebrew imagery has been involved in the composition of this psalm: the raging גּוֹיִם, i.e., non-Hebrew people (vs. 7a); the theophanic element of קוֹל with its effect on the earth (vs. 7b); Yahweh as the divine warrior exemplified through the epithet יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת (vss. 8a and 12a) and the use of war terminology in vss. 7-12; the allusion to the patriarchal covenant through אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב (vs. 8b and 12b).[265] Furthermore, the employed terminology has repeatedly displayed close affinities to the language used in the book of Isaiah which may contribute to the question of dating the psalm.[266] Finally, the recurring motif of אֶרֶץ (altogether five times in the

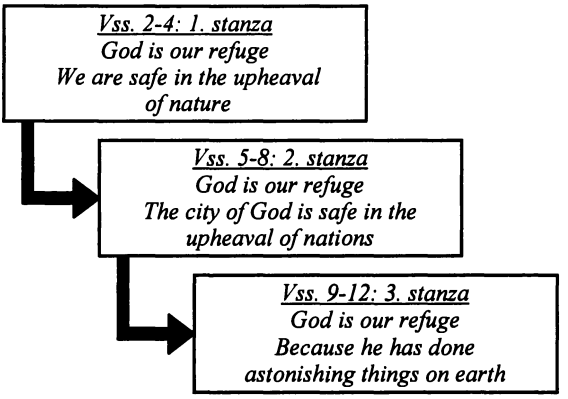
[265] It is certainly not an easy undertaking to identify a tradition as 'Israelite', but in the case of Psa 46 the terminology allows for such a categorization.

[266] Neve has established the use of common traditions by the authors of Psa 46 and Isaiah, and comes to an interesting conclusion: "... in comparing Ps 46 and genuine Isaianic oracles, we have seen the numerous parallels in their common use of a great variety of traditions; in some cases these parallels have even extended to a common terminology [e.g., Isa 33]; an even more striking fact was the discovery that in their common use of two traditions, the *paradise river myth* and the *God is with us* refrain, (1) no other psalm and no other prophetic book uses the *God is with us* refrain, (2) no other text in the Old Testament speaks of the paradise river as flowing *into* [all his italics] Jerusalem. This means that the direction of flow is peculiar to Ps 46 and Is 8^6 and can certainly be related to the hewing out of the underground water channel during the reign of King Hezekiah, an engineering feat mentioned alone by Isaiah among the prophetic books" (1974-75:245). Against that, Rendsburg assumes a northern origin for Psa 46, although the language of the psalm does not closely correspond to his methodological criteria for an Israelite authorship (1990:59). However, while we would agree with Neve to propose a common language use for Psa 46 and Isaiah, we would be cautious to connect the psalm with an actual historic event.

psalm of which four occur in our passage) establishes a certain cosmic or universal character for the psalm (Weiss, 1961:300).[267]

4.3.5.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 46

A comprehensive literary analysis of Psa 46 has been provided by Weiss (1961:255-302; 1984:314-352; Auffret, 1989:323-341) and it becomes apparent that the psalm forms a literary unit, while a variety of poetic devices have been implemented by the author.[268] Normally the psalm is divided into three stanzas with a recurring refrain:[269]



Graph 10: Literary structure of Psa 46

This almost self-evident structure of Psa 46 shows that the passage isolated for the present study does not correspond to the natural strophic division of the psalm, but has rather been chosen for its conceptual unity. Auffret also notices a division along the lines of content and comments with regard to the total structure of Psa 46:

> On voit que si en 2-7 le centre 5 était un tableau paisible de la ville, demeure de Dieu, en 7-12 le centre 9-10 est la présentation, pourrait-on dire, d'une guerre à la guerre sur toute l'étendue de la terre, comme si la paix déjà acquise pour la ville devait s'étendre à toute la terre. ... Si terre (7) et montagnes (3-4) vont jusqu'à

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[267] Kelly understands the tension between distinct Israelite Zion tradition and universal character as a transition from the microcosmos, i.e., the city of God, to the cosmos, i.e., the earth (1970:309).

[268] For examples of assonances, alliterations, recurring roots, various forms of parallelism, and chiasm, see Hunter (1987:63), who summarizes with regard to the poetic devices of Psa 46: "All these poetical features bind the psalm into a unity and its smaller part should be treated in the light of the unity of the psalm".

[269] The suggestion has been made to insert the refrain יהוה צבאות עמנו משגב־לנו אלהי יעקב (vss. 8 and 12) also after vs. 4 in order to create a poem with three symmetrical stanzas (Weiss, 1984:315), but we would agree with Zenger that such an emendation "entspringt 'neuzeitlichem' Harmoniebedürfnis" (Hossfeld and Zenger, 1993:285).

> chanceler par le fait du Dieu qui est pour nous (2) au-dedans de la ville (6), si les nations et la terre, ébranlées (7), doivent se soumettre (11) par le fait du Dieu de Jacob (8 et 12), c'est pourqu'au terme la terre entière entre en partage de la paix que connaît déjà la ville (9-10 et 5) (1989:340).

Thus Psa 46 can basically be divided into two conceptual units which are linked with each other: the city of God (vss. 2-6), which already has peace, is connected to the wider realm of the whole earth through the mighty and astonishing acts of God described through the warrior metaphor in vss. 7-12, which will establish peace on the whole earth. Vss. 10-11 then form the symmetrical central part of the unit describing the מִפְעָלוֹת יְהוָה.

4.3.5.4. Comment on Psalm 46:7-12

While vss. 2-6 describe the upheaval of nature, and in contrast to that, the peace that the city of God enjoys through God's presence, vs. 7 shifts the focus of attention away from Israel and the city.[270]

Vs. 7: Referring back to vss. 3-4, it is now the גּוֹיִם and מַמְלָכוֹת, as equivalents for non-Hebrew peoples, that are in turmoil. Audibly, they are roaring, enraged, but they are also losing their secure stand and are slipping, because Yahweh raises his קוֹל. We have repeatedly established the association of Yahweh's voice with his appearance, and thus a theophanic element can be seen in this vs., especially as an expression allusive to God's acts of judgement, since it elaborates on the effect of the voice on the earth, namely its 'melting away' (cf. Amo 9:5). However, the theophany is only mentioned implicitly and allusionarily, and the psalm as a whole, in our consideration, cannot be included with the theophanic psalms.[271] Rather, the presence of the theophanic element in this psalm once again shows the affinity of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.

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[270] As noted above, vss. 3-4 often serve as an indicator for the presence of the *Chaoskampf*-motif in the present psalm. Mettinger develops the motif further, proposing a metamorphosis for the cultic tradition which is present in Psa 46: "the chaos battle becomes historicized and restated in a new form as the attack on Jerusalem by the peoples. This is the so-called *Völkerkampf* [his italics] motif, or motif of the battle of the peoples" (1985:27). However, as much as it is relevant to discuss the development of a certain motif, the assumption of the *Chaoskampf*-motif for Psa 46 shows the tendency to try to make a text fit into a certain pre-established pattern, i.e., to let it conform to the model of cultic mythological interpretation which, in the case of Psa 46, does not seem to find sufficient textual evidence, since Yahweh is not associated with the natural turmoil in vss. 3-4 whatsoever. While there might be no reference to a mythological battle, the allusion to the roaring and foaming מים certainly brings to mind the theme of creation.

[271] Jeremias understands Psa 46:7 as the "älteste zweigliedrige Kurzform der Theophanieschilderungen" (1965:126), apparently because it is the least developed passage referring to theophany. If 'brevity is equal to antiquity' stands to question, and Jeremias himself observes that the description of theophany in this psalm "dem Bericht

Vs. 8: Here the refrain occurs for the first time, and the conclusion of the second strophe is marked by a סֶלָה at the end of the vs. The usage of the divine epithet יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת and its original association with the ark of the covenant, establish the usage of the warrior imagery in this vs. (cf. note 263). Furthermore, in the second colon the parallel expression אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב is found, referring to the patriarchal covenantal tradition of Israel. מִשְׂגָּב 'stronghold' serves as a qualifier for אֱלֹהִים, and may be allusive to the imagery of God's city in vss. 2-6 since it denotes a physical construction object, parallel to the מַחְסֶה 'refuge, shelter' in vs. 2a.

Vs. 9: The two asyndetic imperatives לְכוּ־חֲזוּ at the beginning of the vs. are directed toward the audience of the author, inviting them to be spectators of God's deeds. The שַׁמּוֹת which Yahweh has done imply a strong element of astonishment, though with a negative connotation. Again, the imagery takes on a universal dimension in setting אֶרֶץ as the stage for Yahweh's deeds.

Vs. 10: The language of war dominates this vs., though with an astonishing variation of the warrior imagery:[272] Yahweh is portrayed as the one who brings wars to an end, not through fighting victoriously, but in destroying the war machinery depicted through the 'bow', the 'spear', and 'wagons'. The destruction is complete and thorough, since Yahweh 'shatters', 'breaks into pieces', and finally, 'burns with fire', which is the ultimate annihilating force.

Vs. 11: A syndetic pair of imperatives with antithetical meanings opens this vs., encouraging the audience to 'let go' of whatever they are momentarily doing[273] and 'acknowledge' a programmatic כִּי־אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים, i.e., that Yahweh is God,[274] and that he is the one who puts an end to wars and brings peace to the earth.[275] The vs. ends with a twofold universal exaltation of, i.e., God among the 'nations' and on the 'earth'.

Vs. 12: The psalm concludes with a repetition of the refrain from vs. 8; cf. there for a comment on vs. 12.

Psa 46 depicts the warrior metaphor in the second conceptual unit of the psalm in vss. 7-12, though notably with a clearly irenic variation of the

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von seinem Eingreifen gegen die wider den Zion anstürmenden Völker (Ps. 46,7) nutzbar gemacht wurde" (1965:158).

[272] Perhaps this surprising turn of events is the motivator for the usage of שמות in vs. 9.

[273] Weiss correctly observes: "Der Imperativ הרפו hat kein Objekt, auch kein ausgesprochenes Subjekt. Das Fehlen des Subjekts und Objekts trägt zur Wirkung bei. Ein jeder soll ablassen von dem, woran er fälschlicherweise festhält" (1961:297).

[274] Comments van Gemeren: "The use of the independent pronoun 'I' in 'I am God' may be an elliptic form of 'I, Yahweh, am god'" (1991:354).

[275] Similar statements are found in Exo 14:14; 2Ch 20:15-17; and Psa 37:7. Isa 30:15; and Lam 3:26.

motif.[276] Yahweh destroys the weapons of war instead of using them.[277] While the psalm as a whole includes allusions to early Israelite traditions (e.g., creation, the exodus, the patriarchal narratives), we could not detect sufficient evidence for the presence of the *Chaoskampf* motif as presented in extra-biblical literature.[278] However, the presence of a development from chaos to order on a universal scale, or from war to peace with regard to city, nations, and finally to the whole earth, could be observed.

4.3.6. Psalm 65:10-14

It is interesting to note that Psa 65 has been widely neglected in the scholarly debate during the past,[279] although it presents in vss. 10-14 one of the most interesting depictions of Yahweh by means of the God of heaven metaphor. Only recently has the discussion been reopened through a thoughtful article by S. Schroer in which she concentrates on a "traditions- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung" (1990:286) of the psalm and observes with regard to our passage: "Die Verse 10-14 sprechen nämlich von JHWH als Wettergott und Regenbringer und zwar in der Tradition kanaanäischer Hymnen oder Beschwörungen des regenbringenden Baals" (1990:292).

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[276] Comments Brettler: "This suggests that when the metaphor 'YHWH is a warrior' is used, YHWH may act as a warrior in a way that is opposite to what is expected. ... This overturning of the expected entailments of the metaphor is not unusual of metaphors as applied to God in the Bible ..." (1993:146).

[277] In trying to explain the variations of the biblical warrior metaphor, Clapham observes with regard to the mythopoeic antecedents of the motif of Yahweh the divine warrior: "Although depicted as the Divine Warrior and King, Yahweh is never a manifestation of or encompassed within any part of nature. The notion that the divine transcends every aspect of the universe is always assumed in Israel's treatment of Yahweh's relations with both history and nature. This feature alone radically distinguishes the Divine Warrior in biblical tradition from the same motif in adjacent cultures and produces important consequences" (1976:116).

[278] Mettinger is a strong proponent of the mythological interpretation of Psa 46 and may be taken as an example for this viewpoint (1985:26-29).

[279] This apparent disinterest in the psalm is not easily explained, especially if one compares it with the abundance of bibliographical entries for such 'popular' psalms like Psa 29. It seems that often the scholarly attention focuses on traditional 'hot spots' with the danger of reiterating long-held viewpoints, without leaving known territory. Besides the prevailing commentaries, a representative bibliography of Psa 65 includes the following: Wiesmann (1935-36:242f.); Rinaldi (1968:113-122); Calmet (1965:24-32); cf. Schroer's remarks with regard to the exegetical value of these three articles (1990:285, n. 3). Furthermore, Delekat (1967:176-180); Crüsemann (1969:122-123; 192-193; 201-202); Petersen (1982:116-123); HaCohen (1987-88:179-183); Schroer (1990:285-301); and Goulder (1990:171-190).

4.3.6.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 65:10-14

Psalm 65:10-14		Translation
10a	פָּקַדְתְּ הָאָרֶץ וְתִשְׁקְקֶהָ	You have taken care[280] of the land[281] and you give overflowing[282] to it,
10b	רַבַּת תַּעְשְׁרֶנָּה	you make it exceedingly rich.
10c	פֶּלֶג אֱלֹהִים מָלֵא מָיִם	The canal of God is full of water.
10d	תָּכִין דְּגָנָם	You provide her grain,[283]
10e	כִּי־כֵן תְּכִינֶהָ׃	for in such a way you prepare it.[284]
11a	תְּלָמֶיהָ רַוֵּה נַחֵת גְּדוּדֶיהָ	Watering[285] its furrows, leveling[286] its ridges.[287]
11b	בִּרְבִיבִים תְּמֹגְגֶנָּה צִמְחָהּ תְּבָרֵךְ׃	With heavy showers[288] you soften it up, its sprouting you bless.

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[280] The tempora perf. - impf. + ו - impf. in 10a and 10b refer to a narrative sequence with the perf. standing at the beginning of the line of thought, i.e., as the initiating action of which the following impfs. are a result. Cf. Michel who discusses the perf. - impf. + ו construction: "Das perf. schien ein Faktum anzugeben, das absolut am Beginn einer Handlungsreihe steht oder losgelöst vom Gang der Handlung explizierend verweilt, das impf. cs. dagegen schien nach dem perf. eine aus dem Faktum sich ergebende Handlung ... zu bezeichnen ..." (1960:21). Dahood understands the perfs. in vss. 10-14 as precatives expressing a wish which is, however, motivated by his view of the passage as a "prayer for rain" (1968:114). It appears best to indicate this sequence by translating the perfs. as past tense and the impfs. as present tense.

[281] From the content of the vs. it becomes clear that the focus is not on the 'earth' as in vs. 9, but has shifted to the land of Palestine.

[282] The Polel impf. occurs only here and the meaning is derived from the Hiphil occurrences in Joe 2:24 and 4:13 where it refers to the overflowing of the wine presses. The imagery seems to be that of rain falling onto the land in sufficiency. BHS suggests with the LXX καὶ ἐμέθυσας αὐτήν, which would correspond to a hypothetical Hiphil וחשקה. Dahood understands the form as a denominative verb from שׁוק 'knee, thigh' and translates 'make her skip with mirth' (1968:109).

[283] With the Syrohexapla we read דגנה instead of דגנם, with the suffix referring to הארץ in 10a. The final ם could be enclitic, rendering 'you provide grain', but probably not a defective writing for a plural form since דגן does not appear elsewhere in the plural in the OT.

[284] With Schroer (1990:290, n. 13) we divide vs. 10 into five colons with a chiastic metric structure (3+2+4+2+3).

[285] In our translation we try to correspond to the Piel inf. of the MT. Most translators take the inf. as a substitute for a Piel imp. (Tate, 1990:137) or vocalize it as a Piel imp. (Dahood, 1968:115) and render the colon 'drench/water its furrows'. Nevertheless, it seems possible to understand the Piel form as an inf. cs. or inf. abs. as the subject of the sentence (Jenni, 1981:117f.) which elaborates on the way in which Yahweh prepares the land (vs. 10e).

[286] The Piel of נחת means 'to make descend, to press down', and the obvious imagery is that of soaking rainfall softening up the soil and leveling out the hard dry ridges.

[287] The גדודיה refer to the clods of soil that have been dried and broken through the heat, and appear as being cut by a knife (cf. the root גדד 'to cut off').

12a עִטַּרְתָּ שְׁנַת טוּבֶךָ	You have crowned[289] the year of[290] your goodness,
12b וּמַעְגָּלֶיךָ יִרְעֲפוּן דָּשֶׁן:	and your tracks[291] drip fatness.
13a יִרְעֲפוּ נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר	The pastures of the wilderness drip,[292]
13b וְגִיל גְּבָעוֹת תַּחְגֹּרָנָה:	and the hills gird themselves with joy.
14a לָבְשׁוּ כָרִים הַצֹּאן	The pastures[293] have clothed themselves with
14b וַעֲמָקִים יַעֲטְפוּ־בָר	flocks,
14c יְתְרוֹעֲעוּ אַף־יָשִׁירוּ:	and the valleys envelop themselves with corn.
	They shout in triumph, yes, they sing.[294]

The MT of Psa 65:10-14 does not represent any major problems for the translation and interpretation of the passage, but appears to have been preserved in a good condition.

4.3.6.2. The Language of Psalm 65:10-14

The language employed in the passage under consideration is clearly influenced by agrarian terminology with pastoral descriptions forming the central imagery and wordfields (Schroer, 1990:290). There is a total count of 17 verbal and 21 nominal forms that are contained in Psa 65:10-14.[295]

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
פָּקַדְתָּ	Psa 65:10	פקד	to visit, attend to, take care of	Verb denoting an association between two persons with a certain purpose, e.g., to inspect (Job 5:24), to punish (Job 35:14; Psa 59:5), to care for somebody (Psa 8:5), in Num as a terminus technicus (90 occurrences) for

[288] Many Hebrew mss read the preposition כ instead of ב at the beginning of the word, creating a comparison 'like heavy showers you soften it up'.

[289] For the translation of the perf. form see note 280.

[290] Many commentators translate 'you have crowned the year with your goodness'. There is, however, no indication of such prepositional rendering in the text and it would disturb the construct chain שנת טובך.

[291] Dahood translates 'your pastures' as reflected in the rendering of the LXX τὰ πεδία σου (1968:116). However, מעגל in the OT denotes 'track, path, encampment' and not 'pasture'.

[292] BHS suggests Niphal יערפו rendering the colon 'the pastures of the steppe are wet (with rain)'. Another possibility is the emendation יריעו 'the pastures will shout for joy'. Both these variants seem to be unnecessary, since vs. 13a connects logically to 12b and takes over the previous object.

[293] The LXX reads οἱ κριοὶ τῶν προβάτων 'the rams of the flock' which would, however, require the construct כרי in the Hebrew *Vorlage*. MT seems to make sufficient sense to be retained and retains the parallelism to the 14b.

[294] BHS suggests to move 14c to the end of 9 instead of 9d תרנין, but the colon fits into the content of vs. 14 perfectly.

[295] We have identified רבת (10b) and מלא (10c) as adjectives, although they are, strictly speaking, nominal and verbal derivatives.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				counting (Num 1:3; 4:23; etc.). In connection with agricultural imagery, shepherds are tending their sheep (Jer 23:2), God is requested to take care of a vine (Psa 80:15).
תְּשַׁקְּקֶהָ	Psa 65:10	שׁוק	to give overflowing (Polel)	Agricultural term. The meaning has been inferred by the two Hiphil occurrences of the verb in Joe 2:24 and 4:13 where it refers to the overflowing of the vine and oil presses.[296]
תַּעְשְׁרֶנָּה	Psa 65:10	עשׁר	to be rich (Qal), to make rich (Hiphil)	Verb denoting the ownership or the transferal of ownership of a large material entity. It usually refers to accumulations of possessions (Gen 14:23; Psa 49:17; Eze 27:33). God's blessings are understood as making rich (1Sa 2:7; Pro 10:22).
תָּכִין תְּכִינֶהָ	Psa 65:10 Psa 65:10	כון	to establish, provide, fix, set up (Hiphil)	Setting one's intention onto a certain goal (1Sa 7:3; 1Ki 2:24; Job 11:3; Psa 103:19). Often in connection with food or providing food (Gen 43:16; Exo 16:5; Job 38:41; Psa 68:11; 78:20). God preparing rain for the earth (Psa 147:8). Alluding to God's power during creation (Job 28:27; Pro 8:27).
רַוֵּה	Psa 65:11	רוה	to water, drench (Piel)	Agricultural term referring to the irrigation of earth and plants (Isa 16:9; 55:10), but also giving people to drink (Psa 36:8). Figuratively, soaking the land with blood during God's judgement (Isa 34:7; Jer 46:10).
נַחֵת	Psa 65:11	נחת	to cause to descend, press down (Piel)	Verb of linear motion with a downward direction, taken from the realm of warfare. Used as a terminus technicus for the pressing together of the long bow, in order to string it (2Sa 22:35 = Psa 18:35), for the penetrating arrow (Psa 38:3), or to bring down warriors (Joe 4:11). The idea of pressing down fits best in our context and becomes apparent from the preceding picture.
תְּמֹגְגֶנָּה	Psa 65:11	מוג	to melt (Qal), soften (Polel)	Object feature resulting from an event (here: the rainfall) denoting the state of becoming liquid or soft. The earth melts from Yahweh's voice (Psa 46:7). Used mostly figuratively where it refers to fear (Exo 15:15; Jos 2:9; Psa 107:26; Isa 14:31; Jer 49:23).
תְּבָרֵךְ	Psa 65:11	ברך	to bless (Piel)	Denoting the bestowal of benefits on another person associated with divine favor and intervention (Job 42:12). Blessing in connection with the bounties of the land (Gen 1:22; Psa 67:7; 107:38; 132:15).

[296] Schroer comments on the first three verbal forms of vs. 10: "Die Verse 10a/b beschreiben den Vorgang des Beregnens zunächst mit den drei Verben *pqd*, *šwq* und *'šr*" (1990:290). While שׁוק certainly has agricultural connotations, the evidence for פקד is sparse (only Psa 80:15 and Jer 23:2 contain an allusion to farming, but no indication of rain), and עשׁר does not occur in an agricultural context whatsoever. Therefore, one feels hesitant to understand vs. 10 as describing rain falling onto the land. This imagery has been reserved for vs. 11.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
עִטַּרְתָּ	Psa 65:12	עטר	to surround (Qal), crown (Piel)	Act of bestowing unto a person with highest honours. Occurs only three more times in the Piel (all in prophetic literature), always referring to the act of crowning (Psa 8:6; 103:4; Sol 3:11). Here the object is not a person, but an abstract entity.
יִרְעֲפוּן יִרְעָפוּ	Psa 65:12 Psa 65:13	רעף	to drip, trickle	Verb of linear motion denoting the constant seepage of various amounts of fluid with a downward direction. Rain pouring down (Job 36:28; Isa 45:8), dew dropping from the clouds (Pro 3:20). There is a definite allusion to the realm of farming.
תַּחְגֹּרְנָה	Psa 65:13	חגר	to gird, put on a belt	Clothing activity, putting on a belt to keep the clothing together (Exo 12:11); often for putting on armor (Deu 1:41; Jdg 3:16; 1Sa 25:13). Figuratively it is used to denote a departure (2Ki 9:1). The imagery of hills girding themselves with joy occurs here only.
לָבְשׁוּ	Psa 65:14	לבשׁ	to clothe, wear	Clothing activity, putting on garments (Gen 3:21; 27:15). In poetic literature it is often used figuratively referring to a state of being encompassed or covered by something (Job 8:22; Psa 104:1). Again, there is no parallel to the present imagery.
יַעֲטְפוּ	Psa 65:14	עטף	to envelop, turn aside, be feeble	Non-linear movement with a circular motion. Can refer to the covering of an object (Psa 73:6), also fainting/feebleness (Psa 142:4; Gen 30:42; Jon 2:7).
יְהַרֹּעֵעוּ	Psa 65:14	רוע	to shout in triumph, shout for joy (Hitpolel)	Verb of communication expressing an emotion audibly. The sounding of trumpets for war (Num 10:9; Jos 6:5), as a war cry (Jos 6:16; 2Ch 13:5); as a shout of joy (Psa 47:1) Most occurrences are from the realm of warfare.[297]
יָשִׁירוּ	Psa 65:14	שיר	to sing	Verb of communication denoting the act of singing. As an expression of triumph (Psa 27:6), out of gratitude and praise (Psa 68:5; 89:1).

Table 13: Verbal forms in Psa 65:10-14

A semantic survey of the verbal forms employed in Psa 65:10-14 has shown some interesting results: from a total number of 17 verbs, seven can be directly or indirectly associated with agricultural terminology.[298] Furthermore, as has been observed by other commentators, the choice of

[297] Out of 40 occurrences 25 are associated with the imagery of war: Num 10:7; 10:9; Jos 6:5; 6:10; 6:16; 6:20; Jdg 7:21; 15:14; 1Sa 17:20; 17:52; 2Ch 13:12; 13:15; Job 30:5; Psa 41:12; 60:10; 81:2; 98:6; 108:10; Isa 15:4; 42:13; 44:23; Jer 50:15; Hos 5:8; Joe 2:1; Zec 9:9.

[298] I.e., the verb either comes from the domain of agriculture (e.g., רוה in 11a) or it takes on an agricultural meaning in certain contexts (e.g., פקד in 10a).

language appears to be unexpected at times, combining verbal forms from other domains with agricultural terms which can be sufficiently explained from the context only.[299] Surprisingly, a number of these unorthodox verbal forms stem from the realm of warfare.[300]

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
הָאָרֶץ	Psa 65:10	אֶרֶץ	earth, land	Geographical object, denoting the habitat of humanity (e.g., Psa 33:8), also the nether world (Exo 15:12). In our context it refers to the land in terms of a territorial unit (Psa 25:13), the land of Palestine (Psa 42:7), and more specifically, to its ground (Psa 17:11; 72;16), its soil (Psa 72:6).
פֶּלֶג	Psa 65:10	פֶּלֶג	canal, channel	Geographical object or construction directing water into a certain direction. It can refer to streams (Psa 1:3; Isa 30:25; 32:2), a channel (Job 38:25; Pro 21:19). In our context the noun must be evaluated in its function as a nomen regum to אֱלֹהִים, forming an expression which does not occur elsewhere.[301]
אֱלֹהִים	Psa 65:10	אֱלֹהִים	god, Elohim	Divine name, but also generic term for the designation of the divinity.
מָיִם	Psa 65:10	מַיִם	water(s)	A natural substance. Here possibly referring to rain water contained in the canal of God.
דְּגָנָם	Psa 65:10	דָּגָן	grain	Plant name, used as food. Agricultural term. Occurs often in the combination 'oil, wine, and grain' denoting the primary agricultural produce and staple foods of Palestine (Gen 27:28; Num 18:12; Deu 7:13; Jer 31:12; Joe 1:10).
תִּלְמֶיהָ	Psa 65:11	תֶּלֶם	furrow	Agricultural term, refers to the deep grooves resulting from plowing the fields. Occurs only four other times (Job 31:38; 39:10; Hos 10:4; 12:12).
גְּדוּדֶיהָ	Psa 65:11	גְּדוּד	ridge, furrow	Not an agricultural term per se, but used here to refer to the hard ridges of the furrows that appear to have been cut as with a knife by the dry weather (cf. Jer 48:37). The meaning is inferred from the context.
רְבִיבִים	Psa 65:11	רְבִיבִים	heavy	Physical event referring to the falling of rain,

[299] As an example Schroer's comment on vs. 11 may be taken: "V. 11b enthält zwei in dieser Bedeutung ungewöhnliche Wörter (*nḥt gdwdh*), deren Bedeutung aber aus der chiastischen Entsprechung zu *tlmjh rwh* einigermaßen erschlossen werden kann" (1990:288).

[300] We identified four such verbs: נחת (11a); מוג (12b); חגר (13b); and רוע (14c).

[301] This divine canal provides water for the earth and finds its closest parallel in Job 38:25 where it refers to rainfall: מי־פלג לשטף חעלה ודרך לחזיז קלות 'who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt' (RSV). Furthermore, in Psa 46:5 there is also mention of a channel coming from the river in the city of God: נהר פלגיו ישמחו עיר־אלהים קדש משכני עליון 'there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High' (RSV). For further discussion of פלג אלהים see below.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
			showers	here in increased amounts (Jer 14:22). God's word is compared to a shower on grass (Deu 32:2), the king is likened to showers onto the land (Psa 72:6); parallel to spring rain (Jer 3:3). The term always occurs in connection with fertility and growth.
צֶמְחָהּ	Psa 65:11	צֶמַח	sprout, growth, sprouting	Plant name denoting the young growth of a plant arising from a germinating seed (Gen 19:25). Used as a verb in the creation account to describe the growth of plant life (Gen 2:5). As a noun it can refer figuratively to Yahweh's offshoot (Isa 4:2; Jer 23:5).
שְׁנַת	Psa 65:12	שָׁנָה	year	Chronological term referring to the time period of twelve months, in agrarian terms the completion of the cycle of seasons.[302]
טוּבֶךָ	Psa 65:12	טוֹבָה	goodness	Moral quality, normally associated with the blessings of God (Gen 50:20; Psa 68:10). A similar expression occurs in Ezr 9:12 where it denotes the 'good of the land', i.e., the produce of the land.
מַעְגְּלֶיךָ	Psa 65:12	מַעְגָּל	path, track, entrench-ment	Geographical object. A marked way (Psa 23:3; Pro 2:5; Isa 27:6). Indentations in the ground left by an object or person that has passed by before (Psa 17:3).[303]
דָּשֶׁן	Psa 65:12	דֶּשֶׁן	fat ashes, fatness, blessing, abundance	Agricultural term referring to the oil won from the olive tree (Jdg 9:9), also a remnant of the burnt sacrifice (Lev 6:3). Originating from this imagery, the term figuratively denotes blessing often with regard to the produce of the land (Job 36:16; Psa 36:9; Isa 30:32).
נְאוֹת	Psa 65:13	נָאָה	pasture	Agricultural term. Geographical object used for grazing animals (Psa 23:2). The construct chain נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר seems to serve as a terminus technicus for a certain geographical area (Jer 9:9; 23:10; Joe 1:19; 2:22) used for grazing.
מִדְבָּר	Psa 65:13	מִדְבָּר	wilder-ness, desert, steppe	Geographical object denoting an uninhabited or sparsely populated region (Job 38:26) with arid conditions (Psa 63:1). In poetic literature often referring to the wilderness experience of the exodus (Psa 95:8; 106:9; 136:16). Wilderness bears a threatening connotation (Lam 4:19).

[302] The reckoning of the year in pre-exilic times was apparently heavily influenced by the sequence of the agricultural seasons, beginning in autumn. The text of the famous Gezer calendar from the 10th century B.C. reads: "His two months are (olive) harvest, His two months are planting (grain), His two months are late planting; His month is hoeing up of flax, His month is harvest of barley, His month is harvest and *feasting* [his italics]; His two months are vine-tending, His month is summer fruit" (Pritchard, 1969a:320).

[303] Often the Canaanite mythological imagery of God riding on his chariot through the land leaving tracks behind on the earth is connected to the מעגל in vs. 12 (cf. Psa 18:11; 68:5,34). However, in all these vss. there is no indication of God riding over the earth, but rather through the clouds. For our context it appears safe to say, that in every place where God has passed by, his blessing is visibly left behind.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
וְגִיל	Psa 65:13	גִּיל	joy, gladness	Emotional state of happiness. Often as a reaction to deliverance by God (Psa 9:15; 14:7; 31:7; 35:9; 53:7). Nature rejoices (Psa 96:11; Isa 35:1; 49:13). A contrary picture to our vs. is described in Isa 16:10 and Jer 48:33.
גְּבָעוֹת	Psa 65:13	גִּבְעָה	hill	Geographical object referring to an elevated land formation. After the pastures of the wilderness, the hillcountry now rejoices. Often in parallel position to 'mountain' (Psa 72:3; 114:4; Pro 8:25; Sol 4:6). Interestingly, in Psa 148:9 a connection is established between 'hill' and the agricultural realm.
כָּרִים	Psa 65:14	כַּר	pasture	Agricultural term. Used only three more times as a geographical object used for grazing animals (Psa 37:20; Isa 30:23; Zep 2:6). Otherwise it refers to rams or lambs (Deu 32:14; 1Sa 15:9; Isa 16:1).
הַצֹּאן	Psa 65:14	צֹאן	flock, sheep	Agricultural term. A collective for a group of domesticated animals, often sheep (Psa 44:22) and/or goats (Job 1:3; Psa 77:21). Figuratively, Israel is described as a flock (Psa 79:13; 80:2; 100:3).
וְעֲמָקִים	Psa 65:14	עֵמֶק	valley, lowland	Geographical object referring to a depression in the landscape. The term indicates broad valleys or lowlands which were suitable for farming (Gen 37:14; Jos 7:24; Psa 84:7). A narrow valley is denoted by גַּיְא Psa 23:4) and is not referred to in agricultural terms.
בָּר	Psa 65:14	בַּר	corn, grain	Agricultural term. Plant name, used for food (Gen 41:35; Psa 72:16; Pro 11:26; 14:4; Jer 23:28; Joe 2:24; Amo 8:6).

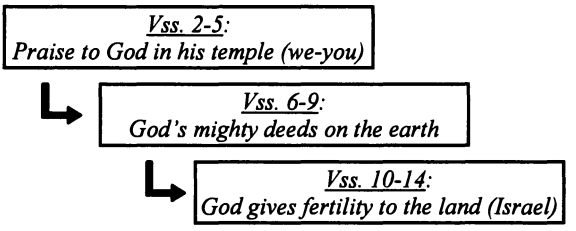
Table 14: Nominal forms in Psa 65:10-14

The language of Psa 65:10-14 is distinctly characterized by agrarian terminology, depicting the basic farming activities of ancient Palestine, i.e., animal husbandry and agriculture, i.e., field farming. Furthermore, the geographical formation of the country is taken into consideration in the description: the author of the psalm is taking his audience from the grazing lands of the wilderness or steppe (on the Transjordan plateau, in the Negev, or in the Arabah), through the Judean hill-country (i.e., the Western central mountain range) toward the lowlands or broad valleys (i.e., the Shephelah or the coastal regions). Thus the three main geographical features of Palestine topography are evoked in the imagery of our passage.

4.3.6.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 65

Before the literary composition of the psalm can be discussed, the unity of the poem should be addressed. The text has been described as consisting of two literary independent pieces (vss. 2-9 and vss. 10-14) which have been

edited by a skillful redactor into one literary unit.[304] The proposed disharmony is exhibited in the content of the two units: vss. 2-9 deals with a more universal imagery, namely, the נוֹרָאוֹת that Yahweh will accomplish to the 'end of the earth' (cf. vs. 9), while vss. 10-14 are concerned with the agricultural fertility of the land of Palestine granted by God. However, in Psa 46, a similar twofold imagery is found: the city of God (vss. 5-6) versus the מִפְעָלוֹת of Yahweh which he in like fashion to Psa 65 accomplishes to the 'end of the earth' (vss. 7-12). In Psa 46 the unity is secured through the consistent reappearance of the אֶרֶץ motif throughout the whole psalm. In our opinion, a similar shift of focus takes place in Psa 65, though in reversed order. From the universal theme of the 'end of the earth' in vss. 2-9, the psalmist focuses on the land of Palestine in vss. 10-14, thus moving from macrocosmos to microcosmos. This seems to have been his original intention which is reflected in the artful change of meaning for אֶרֶץ between vss. 9 and 10. The text of the psalm thus exhibits a tripartite literary structure which is based on the content of the poem (see **Graph 11**).



Graph 11: Literary structure of Psa 65

With regard to vss. 10-14, the question of literary dependency has to be raised. One of the main points of Schroer's article is the similarity of vss. 10-14 to a passage from the Keret Epic (KTU 1.16 III 1-10) which describes Ba'al as the giver of rain for the land.[305] The similarities are predominantly concerned with the motifs and compositional structure

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[304] Petersen describes the formal differences between the two parts which have motivated the compositional view of Psa 65: "Während es in Ps 65 A allgemein um die *Menschen* geht und erzählt wird, wie gnädig und gütig Jahwe sich ihnen gegenüber erweist, setzt Ps 65 B mit v. 10aα neu ein und behandelt eine ganz spezielle Thematik: die *Fruchtbarkeit des Ackerbodens* [his italics] durch den von Jahwe geschenkten Regen" (1982:116; cf. Schroer, 1990:291f.).

[305] Schroer concludes after summarizing the similarities: "Als Fazit möchte ich festhalten, daß der dritte Teil des Psalms mit einiger Wahrscheinlichkeit ein Stück eines alten Baal-Regen-Hymnus ist" (1990:294). However, at the same time, she observes: "Der Text einthält eine Menge von Unsicherheiten, weshalb ich auf Details hier nicht zuviel abstützen möchte. Es geht mir nicht darum, eine literarische Abhängigkeit von Ps 65,10-14 zu diesen Zeilen nachzuweisen" (1990:293).

appearing in the texts. However, Schroer herself notices that there are differences and major uncertainties in the translation of the Ugaritic text which appear at crucial points.[306] While we would not deny the similarities between the psalm and its Ugaritic counterpart, it nevertheless appears to us that the imagery portrayed in Psa 65:10-14 relates such a common experience of the agricultural-oriented inhabitants of the Levant that the points of convergence between the two texts should not be over-interpreted as indicating a common origin. Furthermore, the geographical descriptions of the passage in the psalm identified above clearly correspond to the Palestine topography, while the Ugaritic text only mentions a reconstructed *tl[m]* in line 11 which could refer to heights.[307]

4.3.6.4. Comment on Psalm 65:10-14

In vss. 2-5 the praise of the psalmist to God for his forgiveness is presented. The locale of praise, prayer, and forgiveness is depicted in the equivalents 'Zion' (vs. 2), 'your courts', 'your house', and 'your temple' (vs. 5). Vss. 6-9 shift the focus away from the temple area to God's universal deeds who 'establishes mountains' (vs. 7), 'stills the roaring seas' as much as in parallel position with the 'tumult of the peoples' (vs.8), is feared by the inhabitants of the whole earth, and makes morning and evening, i.e., the whole world, rejoicing (vs. 9). It is interesting to note the corresponding imagery to Psa 46:7-12. Again, the chaos-motif is presented both in the creation- and the raging-people-imagery.[308]

Vs. 10: Again, a shift of locale is accomplished through the semantic change of אֶרֶץ between vs. 9 and 10. Now, the land of Palestine, and more specifically its agricultural productive properties are, the focus of attention. We would retain the temporal quality of the perf. form פָּקַדְתָּ, understanding the following as a prayer of thanksgiving which is in tune with the general tone of the psalm. God visiting the country is the initiating factor for all the

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306 A comparison of the translation provided by Schroer with the outdated text published in ANET (Pritchard, 1969a:148) shows some astonishing differences: there is no mention of the 'well' in line 2, 4, and 9 in ANET, but *'n* is translated with 'ploughland', viz., 'ploughmen' (cf. also De Moor, 1987:216f.) which takes away any similarities to the פלג אלהים in Psa 65:10. Schroer herself notices another crucial difference: "Festzuhalten ist, daß bei aller Ähnlichkeit der Psalm 65 das zu erwartende Stichwort 'Regen' (*mṭr*), das im Abschnitt des Keret-Epos viermals genannt wird, nicht nennt" (1990:295).

307 Interestingly, this line is altogether missing in ANET (Pritchard, 1969a:148), and should not be taken as a clear indicator for a geographical description.

308 One could also employ the common terminology of *Chaoskampf* and *Völkerkampf*. However, the Hiphil of the verb in vs. 9 (שׁבח) does not evoke any war-like associations, rather, the opposite. God does not fight the chaos, but soothes it, stills it, unlike the normal depiction of these motifs in extra-biblical literature.

resulting goodness coming to the land (cf. Psa 8:5). He makes the land overflow (וְתִשְׁקְקֵהוּ) as the wine press overflows with the abundance of wine.[309] The 'canal of God' has to be understood along the lines of a "conduit for rain water from reservoirs above the heavens down to the earth" (Tate, 1990:143), and is equivalent to God's life-sustaining power, as expressed in the river flowing forth from Eden in Gen 2:10-14 (cf. Keel, 1972:122). The psalmist continues in 10d with the description of God's provisions for the land, i.e., 'grain', followed by an introduction to a further detailed portrayal of God's blessings in 10e.

Vs. 11: We have retained the infs. in 11a, and understand the vs. as a more detailed description of God's blessing to the land. The rainfall drenches the furrows, softens up the dry ridges, and promotes the sprouting of the seeds in the soft soil. Besides a strictly agricultural language, the vs. also exhibits some unexpected terminology such as רַוֵּה נַחֵת in 11a.

Vs. 12: The שְׁנַת טוּבֶךָ alludes to the continued presence of God's goodness throughout the yearly seasonal cycle,[310] starting with the autumn rains.[311] His 'tracks' (מַעְגָּל) which are dripping with 'fatness',[312] refer to the visible remains of God's blessings, i.e., the effects of the rain which manifests itself in the heavy and sodden land. Where the rain has passed, God's tracks can be seen on the fertile land.[313]

Vs. 13: With נָאווֹת מִדְבָּר the psalmist begins the description of God's agricultural blessings on the geography of Palestine. Moving from the semi-desert grazelands, which have also been blessed with rainfall, through the joyous central hill country, all nature seems to be impersonated through the rainfall and its accompanying fertility (cf. Psa 96:11; Isa 35:1; 49:13).

Vs. 14: Finally, the broad valleys of the Shephelah are reached and the psalmist describes how they are 'clothed' and 'covered' with 'flocks' and 'corn'. What was formerly bare and naked is now full of growth and life.

Psa 46:10-14 uses the God of heaven metaphor to describe God as the giver of rain and fertility, a motif which is used repeatedly in the OT (Schroer,

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309 We would suggest that there is no allusion to rain yet.

310 Cf. note 302.

311 The expression is often interpreted as an indicator for the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm, i.e., the yearly autumn festival for which the psalm would have been recited (Tate, 1990:138f.). Against that, cf. Crüsemann's (1969:201f.) considerations to the personal hymnic character of the psalm which does not fit a congregational setting for the psalm. Schroer concludes: "So zeigt die Formgeschichte, daß Psalm 65 eine recht eigenwillige Kreation ist, die an überlieferten Formen frei arbeitet" (1990:292).

312 דֶּשֶׁן can refer to the oil of the olive tree (Jdg 9:9). Oil in turn is often associated with rain (Schroer, 1990:291).

313 Cf. note 303.

1990:297) though it is not a central aspect of the metaphor in the psalms. Though we would agree that the imagery of the psalm is a common motif in the traditions of the ancient Near East, we do not see the necessity of proposing a "kanaanäische Vergangenheit" for vss. 10-14 (Schroer, 1990:300),[314] since the vss. describe a common oriental motif from a distinct Israelite perspective.

The dating of the psalm remains somewhat uncertain, since it portrays an experience which was experienced again and again throughout the history of Israel. From its sequence in the Hebrew psalter and its correspondence to the language of Isaiah and other prophetic literature (cf. the semantic notes), a tentative date in the second half of the monarchy appears to be thinkable.[315]

4.3.7. Psalm 68:15-22

Psa 68 represents one of the most widely discussed[316] and enigmatic texts in the Hebrew psalter,[317] whereas the difficulties arise particularly from the

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[314] Schroer summarizes the theological and religious historical implications of her article: "Er ist ... ein kleines Zeugnis einer Zionstheologie, die keine Schwierigkeiten damit hatte, JHWH als Regenbringer zu verehren, ihm dieselben Eigenschaften zuzuschreiben wie die KanaanäerInnen ihrem Gott Baal. Es spricht einiges dafür, daß Ps 65 Zeugnis eines offenen, auf Integration bedachten JHWH-Glaubens ist, der Polemik gegen Baal nicht oder nicht mehr nötig hat, dessen Zentrum zwar der Kult von Jerusalem ist, der aber fähig ist, über die Mauern des Tempelbereichs hinauszuschauen und in der alten Sprache der Ackerbauer und Viehzüchter, in der Sprache Kanaans zu sprechen" (1990:301). Accordingly, Schroer dates the psalm into the exilic and post-exilic period (1990:299).

[315] Psa 65 is often dated to the exilic or post-exilic period. This is, however, motivated by form-critical considerations which do not correspond to the somewhat free character of the poem. Goulder presents an interesting historical interpretation of Psa 65 in which he understands the poem as an answer to a prayer of David directed to God after he fled into exile to Mahanaim: following the death of Uriah, there was a continuing drought which was to be considered a punishment by God for David's deeds. The whole tension had culminated in Absalom's rebellion, but then there came a divine thunderstorm to David's rescue, confirming divine forgiveness for his sins. Psa 65 reflects this situation (Goulder, 1990:171-178). While this view is certainly not in accordance with the mainstream of biblical scholarship, it provides an interesting scenario which would adequately explain the various themes presented in our psalm.

[316] A short but representative bibliography to Psa 68 until 1990, which includes all the more important articles and monographs is given by Tate (1990:159f.).

[317] Comments Kraus: "Es gibt im Psalter wohl kaum ein Lied, das in seiner Textverderbnis und Zusammenhanglosigkeit den Interpreten vor so große Aufgaben stellt wie Ps 68" (1960:468).

condition of the text[318] and the question of an overall theme pervading the psalm, since it appears to be somewhat disconnected, with no unifying topic permeating the poem as a whole.[319] Such a state of affairs justifies our approach to some degree, namely, to isolate a passage within the psalm which reflects both the God of heaven and warrior metaphors adequately. Since the structure of the psalm already presents a number of vexing problems, our selection may not be in tune with the normally proposed structural units (see below), but are derived from our statistical evaluation of metaphors of God in the psalms undertaken in chapter 3.

4.3.7.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 68:15-22

Psalm 68:15-22	Translation
15a בְּפָרֵשׂ שַׁדַּי מְלָכִים	When[320] Shaddai[321] scattered[322] kings,
15b בָּהּ תַּשְׁלֵג בְּצַלְמוֹן׃	thereby it[323] snowed[324] on Zalmon.[325]

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[318] The text of Psa 68 has been described by various scholars as corrupt (see note 317), but the alleged textual corruption of the psalm is mainly due to the fact that there are a "high number of *hapax legomena* and low-frequency words in the psalm" (Tate, 1990:170) which are not easily translated. Tate continues: "More than fifteen words and expressions in this psalm do not appear elsewhere in biblical literature. As many as two dozen words are used which are found less than twenty times in MT; half of them less than ten times" (1990:170). Thus we will exhibit a certain bias toward MT, since the endeavour is to understand the transmitted text, and not to make it understandable from a certain scholarly perspective through emendations (cf. Keel's remarks with regard to vss. 12-15, 1977b:14f., n. 6).

[319] Kraus summarizes the tendencies in approaching the psalm: "Seit geraumer Zeit gehen die Auffassungen, die zu diesem Psalm geäußert worden sind, weit auseinander. Dabei beobachtet man immer wieder die beiden entgegengesetzten Tendenzen: entweder das in seinem Grundgedanken nicht erfaßbare Lied zu atomisieren, es in einzelne disparate Stücke zu zerschlagen; oder die zusammenhanglosen Einzelteile von einer historischen oder kultischen Hypothese aus zu harmonisieren" (1960:468).

[320] Inf. cs. with ב at the beginning of a sentence often takes on a temporal meaning (Jenni, 1981:119).

[321] We retain שדי in our translation as a divine name.

[322] The Piel of פרשׂ can also mean 'spread out', but in comparison to the second colon and the imagery of falling snow, the meaning 'scatter' appears more appropriate.

[323] With Keel we disregard the accentuation of MT and understand בה as belonging to the second colon of the vs. (1977b:17, n. 1; cf. also Fokkelman, 1990:74). Thus it refers back to בפרשׂ in the first colon (cf. Gen 24:14), and balances the meter (3+3).

[324] BHS suggests to read כהתשׂ שלג 'like the melting of snow' instead of בה תשלג, but this does not seem to be necessary since the two verbs of the vs. complement each other in their imagery. Vs. 15 has been the subject of a variety of emendations (cf. Keel, 1977b:13-15) which at times have nothing in common with the original MT, but usually are the result of the attempt to connect vs. 15 to the preceding vss. 12-14. However, if one understands vs. 15 as an introduction to the following vss., MT can be retained and even makes sense within the overall imagery of Bashan-mountains. The usage of impf. in this colon denotes a resulting action to the preceding colon.

16a הַר־אֱלֹהִים הַר־בָּשָׁן	A mountain of gods[326] is[327] the mountain of Bashan;[328]
16b הַר גַּבְנֻנִּים הַר־בָּשָׁן:	A mountain of peaks[329] is the mountain of Bashan.
17a לָמָּה תְּרַצְּדוּן הָרִים גַּבְנֻנִּים	Why do you watch with envy,[330] o mountains with peaks,[331]
17b הָהָר חָמַד אֱלֹהִים לְשִׁבְתּוֹ	the mountain God has desired as his dwelling? [332]
17c אַף־יְהוָה יִשְׁכֹּן לָנֶצַח:	Yes, Yahweh will abide (there) forever.
18a רֶכֶב אֱלֹהִים רִבֹּתַיִם	The chariots[333] of God are twice ten-thousand,[334]
18b אַלְפֵי שִׁנְאָן	thousands of 'bright ones'.[335]
18c אֲדֹנָי בָּם סִינַי בַּקֹּדֶשׁ:	Adonai has come from Sinai[336] into the sanctuary.[337]

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[325] Taken as a geographical allusion, צלמון could refer to a hill near Shechem (Jdg 9:48) where no snow occurs, but also and more probably to Jebel ed-Druz, a mountain "located in Transjordan on the borders of Bashan [which] has peaks more than 6000 feet high on which snow falls in winter" (Tate, 1990:166). Furthermore, the rock of that mountain is of volcanic origin with a dark appearance (צלם 'grow black') which creates a literary contrast with the falling snow.

[326] As in 1Sa 14:15 the *nomen regens* אלהים serves as an indicator for the superlative, or as an intensifier (cf. Joüon, 1991:525, §141, n.). However, the expression does not only fulfill a grammatical purpose, but has to be seen in the context of vss. 16-17. Comments Vlaardingerbroek: "M.i. hebben de vss 16 en 17 alleen dan goede zin, wanneer men er niet enkel beeldspraak in ziet, maar ook een weerspiegeling van een zekere strijd om de voorrang tussen verschillende heiligdommen, of, beter gezegd, van de weerstanden waarop de centralisering van de cultus in Israel stuitte" (1973:75f.). Our translation follows Day which would fit the idea of rivalry and envy expressed in vs. 17 (Day, 1985:116).

[327] We understand vs. 16 as a bipartite nominal sentence (cf. Joüon, 1991:568, §154, f), and not as a sequence of four vocatives (Tate, 1990:161; Vlaardingerbroek, 1973:72).

[328] הר־בשן refers to the mountainous area northeast of the Sea of Galilee with the Jebel ed-Druz lying on its Eastern extents. Bashan in vs. 23 has been interpreted as a name for the mythical sea serpent (e.g., Dahood, 1968:145; for other proponents of that translation, cf. Day, 1985:114). But the text of vs. 23 perfectly creates an antithetical parallelism between the mountain 'Bashan' and the 'depth of the sea', and Bashan in vs. 23 should thus be understood as parallel to the usage of the same word in vs. 16. The identification of Bashan will be discussed below.

[329] The גבנים refer to rounded peaks associated with volcanic mountains.

[330] רצד is a *hapax legomenon*, but its Piel meaning ('to watch stealthily or with envious hostility') appears to be well-established.

[331] גבנים has appositional character to הרים and expresses a quality, i.e., the cone-like appearance of the peaks in the Bashan mountain range (Joüon, 1991:478, §131, c).

[332] חמד אלהים לשחו in 17b is an asyndetic relative clause where the relative pronoun has been omitted (Joüon, 1991:593-595, §158, a-d).

[333] Vogt vocalizes רכב as a participle of רכב 'to ride' (1965b:460), but the imagery of God's chariots seems to be perfectly fitting here. The sing. form has to be understood in a collective way (cf. Exo 14:7).

[334] The dual could be understood as a general indicator for plurality. Comments Jenni: "Multiplikativa werden zum Teil durch das Fem. im Sing. ausgedrückt: אחת

19a עָלִיתָ לַמָּרוֹם שָׁבִיתָ שֶּׁבִי	You ascended to the height, you took prisoners,[338]
19b לָקַחְתָּ מַתָּנוֹת בָּאָדָם	you received gifts from[339] mankind,
19c וְאַף סוֹרְרִים לִשְׁכֹּן יָהּ אֱלֹהִים׃	and even[340] those who rebel at the dwelling[341] of Yah, God.[342]
20a בָּרוּךְ אֲדֹנָי יוֹם יוֹם	Blessed be Adonai day by day,[343]
20b יַעֲמֹס־לָנוּ הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ סֶלָה׃	the God of our salvation carries for us[344] - Selah!
21a הָאֵל לָנוּ אֵל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת	God is for us a God of[345] deliverance,
21b וְלַיהוִה אֲדֹנָי לַמָּוֶת תּוֹצָאוֹת׃	and to Yahweh Adonai (belong) the escapes[346] from death.[347]

'einmal', שבע 'siebenmal', teils durch eine fem. Dual-Form: ארבעתים 'viermal'..." (1981:217).

[335] Various translations have been proposed for שנאן (cf. Vlaardingerbroek, 1973:80-83). Tate (1990:161) follows Albright (1950:25) and translates 'thousands of warriors', but has to delete the א and propose a Ugaritic etymology from *tnn* "which designates a class of archers/warriors who accompanied the chariots" (Tate, 1990:166). Retaining MT, שנאן would mean 'the bright ones' from שנא 'to shine' and maybe refer to the angelic hosts of Yahweh's army. This would to some extent also reflect the LXX rendering εὐθηνούντων 'those who thrive/prosper'.

[336] Sinai could also be a divine epithet, a short version of אלהים זה סיני 'God, the one of Sinai' from vs. 9. However, in the OT, it is always taken as a geographical term.

[337] BHS suggests to read בא מסיני 'he has come from Sinai' (cf. Deu 33:2) instead of בם סיני found in MT 'Adonai is among them, Sinai in holiness'. A final decision seems to be difficult and both readings appear to be possible.

[338] Literally: 'you took captives captive'. The imagery is that of taking prisoners of war (Vlaardingerbroek, 1973:87).

[339] The ב is not understood as a *bet essentia* 'you received men as gifts' (Joüon, 1991:486, §133, c), but rather causative or instrumental (cf. Gen 9:6; Num 31:11).

[340] BHS follows with its reading some Hebrew mss together with the Syriac translation, while the edition of the Hebrew codices of Kennicott, de Rossi and Ginsburg reads אך.

[341] The Qal inf. cs. is not easily translated and the best option seems to take the prepositional force of ל into account (cf. Tate, 1990:161).

[342] BHS suggests לשכן יה אלהים and proposes the Syrian translation for which the Hebrew *Vorlage* would read לא ישכנו לפני אלהים 'they dwell not before God' or 'they do not submit to God'.

[343] We understand יום יום as belonging to 20a which makes 20b grammatically independent (Fokkelmann, 1990:74).

[344] In the sense of carrying a burden for someone. Cf. the reading of the LXX κατευοδώσει ἡμῖν 'he will prosper us'. Perhaps the imagery is God loading benefits on us, as a tradesman loads his donkey with products.

[345] ל replaces the genitive here (cf. Joüon, 1991:473, §130, a).

[346] Normally, the term denotes the 'end of the boundaries' (cf. semantic notes below). Hauge suggests the following translation for 21b: "To Yahweh the Lord belongs the territory facing death" (1988b:5). He understands the תוצאות as an ideological description for the boundaries around the sanctuary, and ליהוה at the beginning of 21b as a designation for a special gate (Psa 118) into the temple area. Thus he links the vs. to a

22a אַךְ־אֱלֹהִים יִמְחַץ רֹאשׁ אֹיְבָיו	Verily - God will shatter the head of his enemies,
22b קָדְקֹד שֵׂעָר מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּאֲשָׁמָיו׃	the hairy scalps[348] of those who continuously walk in their trespasses.

The text of our passage has presented numerous problems which often resulted from a low frequency of occurrences for the respective word within the OT, but it has been shown that the attempt to follow MT in this case without major emendations can lead to a relatively coherent translation.

4.3.7.2. The Language of Psalm 68:15-22

A number of nominal sentences (vss. 16, 18, and 21) brings the total count of our passage to only 15 verbal forms, but 46 nominal forms which are, however, repetitious to some degree.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
בְּפָרְשׂ	Psa 68:15	פרשׂ	to scatter, spread out (Piel)	A linear horizontal movement referring to the redistribution of a group of objects or persons. Occurs altogether nine times in the Piel: spreading of clouds (Job 26:9), spreading out of hands (Psa 143:6; Isa 1:15; 25:11; 65:2; Jer 4:31; Lam 1:17), scattering of people (Zec 2:10).
תַּשְׁלֶג	Psa 68:15	שׁלג	to snow (Hiphil)	Physical event, natural process of snowing. Only occurs here as a denominative verb. Formed from שֶׁלֶג 'snow'.[349]
תִּרְצָדוּן	Psa 68:17	רצד	to watch with enmity or envy (Piel)	Moral behaviour, experience of a negative feeling due to an advantage gained by someone else. Hapax legomenon.
חָמַד	Psa 68:17	חמד	to desire	Attitude of wishing to attain an object (Exo 34:24; Deu 7:25), person (Exo 20:17), or abstract entity (Pro 1:22).
לְשִׁבְתּוֹ	Psa 68:17	ישׁב	to dwell, sit	Verb denoting existence in a certain place. God dwells in heaven (Psa 33:14), in Zion (Psa 9:12), above the flood (Psa 29:10), upon the cherubim

ritual procession centering around the death motif, expressing the literary form of a rite of passage from death to life as found in the story of Hezekiah's healing (Isa 38) (Hauge, 1988b:1-29).

[347] The nominal sentence is not easily translated, but the ל at the beginning of the colon is understood as indicating possession, and thus the sense would be: Yahweh has control over death.

[348] קדקד שׂער has caused some debate, but should be seen parallel to מראשׁ פרעות אויב 'from the long-haired heads of the enemy' in Deu 32:42 (cf, Vlaardingerbroek, 1973:95-98).

[349] We have translated the fem. form with an impersonal 'it snowed' (cf. Amo 4:7; Mic 3:6; Psa 50:3; see also Joüon, 1991:558, §152, c).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				(Psa 99:1), on his throne (Psa 47:9).
יִשְׁכֹּן לִשְׁכֹּן	Psa 68:17 Psa 68:19	שכן	to dwell, abide	Verb denoting existence in a certain place. In poetic literature it is mostly used to denote the dwellings of man (Job 29:25; Psa 37:29; 120:5). With regard to God, he abides on Mount Zion (Psa 74:2), in Jerusalem (Psa 135:21).
עָלִיתָ	Psa 68:19	עלה	to go up, ascend	Verb of motion, expressing an upward direction of movement. The verb can refer to people or objects. God going up in triumph (Psa 47:6).
שָׁבִיתָ	Psa 68:19	שבה	to take captive	Military term referring to the taking of captives in war (Gen 14:14; Num 21:1; 1Ch 5:21; Jer 41:10).
לָקַחְתָּ	Psa 68:19	לקח	to take, receive	Highly generic term. Verb of motion denoting the physical transfer of an object or entity.
סוֹרְרִים	Psa 68:19	סרר	to rebel, be rebellious	Verb expressing a hostile attitude or action, i.e., to rise up against an authority with the presumed intention to overthrow it or to act against it (Deu 21:18; Psa 66:7; 68:6). Stubbornness (Neh 9:29). Especially rebellion against God (Psa 78:8; Isa 30:1; 65:2; Jer 5:23; Zec 7:11).
בָּרוּךְ	Psa 68:20	ברך	to bless, kneel	Denoting the bestowal of benefits on another person associated with divine favor and intervention (Job 42:12). Standard expression for praising God (Psa 28:6; 31:22; 41:13; 66:20; 68:35; 72:18), although in connection with אֲדֹנָי it only occurs here.
יַעֲמָס־	Psa 68:20	עמס	to load, carry a load	Verb of non-linear movement, to carry a load or cause to carry a load. Attaching a burden on an animal (Gen 44:13; Neh 13:15; Isa 46:1) or person (1Ki 12:11; Neh 4:11). The imagery of God loading his people with blessings might be applicable here.
יִמְחַץ	Psa 68:22	מחץ	to shatter, smite	Physical action involving a destructive and violent element intended against an object, often the head or skull of an enemy or his bones (Num 24:8,17; Deu 33:1; Jdg 5:26; Psa 68:24; Hab 3:13).
מִתְהַלֵּךְ	Psa 68:22	הלך	to go (Qal), walk about (Hitpael)	Verb of linear motion, effecting a change of location (a rather generic term). In the Hitpael it denotes a continuous action (Psa 26:3; 105:13).

Table 15: Verbal forms in Psa 68:15-22

A number of verbal forms in Psa 68:15-22 express the warrior metaphor and are denotative of war imagery: פרשׂ (vs. 15), שבה (vs. 19), סרר (vs. 19), and מחץ (vs. 22). This imagery is combined with a personification of nature (vs. 17). The עלה of vs. 19 in this context belongs to the terminology of the God of heaven metaphor.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
שַׁדַּי	Psa 68:15	שַׁדַּי	Shaddai	Divine name. Normally occurs as a compound or in parallel position with El or Elyon. Strong presence in the patriarchal narratives (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25), and in Job (31 out of 48 total occurrences in the OT). In our text it stands on its own.[350]
מְלָכִים	Psa 68:15	מֶלֶךְ	king	Referring to a person who has absolute authority within a particular area. Here it is used as a metonymy for kingdoms of the earth which are subjected by God (Psa 2:10; 72:11; 110:5; 136:17,18).
בְּצַלְמוֹן	Psa 68:15	צַלְמוֹן	Zalmon	Geographic name.[351]
הַר הַר הַר הַר הָרִים הָהָר	Psa 68:16 Psa 68:16 Psa 68:16 Psa 68:16 Psa 68:17 Psa 68:17	הַר	mountain	Geographical object, high elevation of land, often as a place of refuge (Psa 11:1; 121:1; 125:2). Especially God's holy hill, mount Zion (Psa 2:6; 3:5; 43:3), is mentioned. Mountains are also reminiscent of creation and the cosmic struggle; they fall before God's anger (Psa 104; 144). Mountains are mentioned as the dwelling of god(s).
אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים	Psa 68:16 Psa 68:17 Psa 68:18 Psa 68:19 Psa 68:22	אֱלֹהִים	god, Elohim	Divine name, but also generic term for the designation of the divinity. In vs. 16 it refers to gods as becomes apparent through its parallelism with הַר־בָּשָׁן in the same line, but also serves as an intensifier for הַר.[352]
בָּשָׁן בָּשָׁן	Psa 68:16 Psa 68:16	בָּשָׁן	Bashan	Geographic name referring to a high mountainous plateau northeast of the Sea of Galilee in Transjordan "which extends from Mt. Hermon to the Yarmuk river" (LaSor, 1979-88b:436).
גַּבְנֻנִּים גַּבְנֻנִּים	Psa 68:16 Psa 68:17	גַּבְנוּן	peak, rounded summit	Geographic feature referring to the top part of a mountain or hill. Occurs only in Psa 68 (cf. Keel, 1977b:18f., n. 2).
יְהוָה וְלִיהוָה	Psa 68:17 Psa 68:21	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name.
רֶכֶב	Psa 68:18	רֶכֶב	chariot	Artifact. Military term referring to a horse-drawn vehicle used in warfare as a mobile platform for archers. God riding upon a chariot (Hab 3:8).
שְׁנָאָן	Psa 68:18	שְׁנָאָן	'bright ones'	Hapax legomenon. Uncertain term, possibly referring to the angelic host which ultimately is God's army (cf. note 335). In Deu 33:2 a similar

[350] The etymology and meaning of שדי remains uncertain. The LXX translates it with παντοκράτωρ 'all-powerful', but the Hebrew term has been associated with a variety of meanings: 'my destroyer' (Hebr. שדד), 'rain-god', 'sufficient', 'lord', 'mountain-god' (Akk. *šadu* 'mountain'). As much as a latter meaning would fit our context, it remains preferable to retain the Hebrew term as a divine name and note its affinity to the imagery of our passage.

[351] Cf. note 325.

[352] Cf. note 326.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				imagery is described: God coming from Sinai, 'from the ten thousands of holy ones'.
אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנָי	Psa 68:18 Psa 68:20 Psa 68:21	אֲדֹנָי	Adonai	Divine name ('my Lord'). Appears six times alone in Psa 68, three times in our passage. The term comes from the realm of kingship and designates God as the heavenly king (cf. Isa 6). It appears that it was used as a substitute for Yahweh (cf. the vocalization of יהוה in MT).
סִינַי	Psa 68:18	סִינַי	Sinai	Geographical name referring to the mountain in the Sinai peninsula (Jebel Mûsā?). Place of Yahweh's revelation as law-giver to Israel during the Exodus (Exo 19). Used as a divine epithet in Psa 68:9 in parallel position to 'God of Israel'.
בַּקֹּדֶשׁ	Psa 68:18	קֹדֶשׁ	sanctuary, holiness	Moral quality, often associated with God's presence and appearance (Exo 15:11). In our context it refers to the construction object, the sanctuary (Exo 28:43; 29:30; 35:19; Psa 63:2; 68:24; 74:3; Eze 44:27).
לַמָּרוֹם	Psa 68:19	מָרוֹם	height	Spatial dimension, denoting the elevated position of a person or object. Synonymous to 'heaven' (Job 16:19; 25:2; Psa 71:19; 102:20), his position of judgement (Psa 7:8; 10:5).
שָׁבִי	Psa 68:19	שְׁבִי	captive, prisoner of war	Military terminology. The state of being taken as a prisoner of war and held captive (Num 21:1; Deu 21:10; 2Ch 28:17). Predominant in prophetic literature with regard to the captivity of Israel (Isa 20:4; 46:2; Jer 20:6; 30:10).
מַתָּנוֹת	Psa 68:19	מַתָּנָה	gift	An object or entity transferred from one person to another without reimbursement (Gen 25:6; Lev 23:38). People can be gifts for God (Num 18:6,7). Often in connection with a sacrificial service (Eze 20:31; Num 18:29).
בָּאָדָם	Psa 68:19	אָדָם	Adam, man, mankind	Human being. In our context it refers in a generic manner to mankind in general.
יָהּ	Psa 68:19	יָהּ	Yah	Divine name. Occurs mainly in the psalms (41 out of 46 total occurrences are found in the Hebrew psalter), especially in Book 4 and 5, and there, often as a standardized expression הַלְלוּ יָהּ 'praise the Lord'. It appears that יָהּ was used as a substitute or abbreviation for יהוה in later usage, although there are two early occurrences in the Pentateuch, namely Exo 15:2 and 17:16.[353]
יוֹם יוֹם	Psa 68:20 Psa 68:20	יוֹם	day	Unit of time. The expression יוֹם יוֹם 'daily' refers to a repeated process (Psa 61:9).
הָאֵל הָאֵל	Psa 68:20 Psa 68:21	אֵל	god, El	Divine name. Most generally used as a generic appellation of the divinity, also of a foreign god or idol (Isa 44:17). Referring to the God of

[353] Again we note the difficulties in dating a biblical text in accordance to the divine names used in this text.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
אֵל	Psa 68:21			Israel, it is normally qualified with a noun or adjective.[354]
יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ	Psa 68:20	יְשׁוּעָה	salvation, help, deliver-ance	Rescue from a dangerous situation, both in a physical and a figurative way (Psa 3:8; 28:8; 35:3). Here the term is used as a qualifier for אֵל.
מוֹשָׁעוֹת	Psa 68:21	מוֹשָׁעוֹת	deliver-ance, saving act	Hapax legomenon. From the parallel position to the preceding term, the meaning of the form becomes apparent.
לַמָּוֶת	Psa 68:21	מָוֶת	death	Physiological state of being dead, without life.
תּוֹצָאוֹת	Psa 68:21	תּוֹצָאָה	escape, outgoing, border, extremity	Spatial dimension denoting the termination of a unit. The word normally occurs in connection with גְּבוּל 'border' and is used as a terminus technicus for the extent of a boundary in the description of the conquest and land distribution in Num 34 and Jos 15-19.
רֹאשׁ	Psa 68:22	רֹאשׁ	head	Body part. It is also used figuratively to denote a preeminent position of a person or object (Job 12:24; Psa 8:43). Here it refers to body parts.
אֹיְבָיו	Psa 68:22	אוֹיֵב[355]	enemy	Person who is continuously and actively hostile toward somebody else. The enemies of the psalmist are a common motif in the psalms (they appear 74 x) and are usually equivalent to Yahweh's enemies (Psa 3:8; 9:6; 18:18; especially 138:7).
קָדְקֹד	Psa 68:22	קָדְקֹד	head, scalp, crown of the head	Body part referring to the top part of the head (Deu 28:35; Isa 3:17). Often used in parallel position to רֹאשׁ (Gen 49:26). Breaking the קָדְקֹד (Jer 2:16). For a similar imagery, cf. Deu 32:42.
שֵׂעָר	Psa 68:22	שֵׂעָר	hair	Body part (Num 6:5; Jdg 16:22; 2Sa 14:26; Sol 6:5).
בַּאֲשָׁמָיו	Psa 68:22	אָשָׁם	guilt, offense, trespass	Moral behaviour referring to an offense of God's law (Jer 51:5). Mostly used as a designation for the guilt-offering (Lev 5:6; 1Sa 6:3).

Table 16: Nominal forms in Psa 68:15-22

Central to the language of Psa 68:15-22 is the הַר motif which occurs six times in our passage, in addition to the mention of specific geographical names of mountains or mountain ranges: צַלְמוֹן (vs. 15), בָּשָׁן (vs. 16), and סִינַי (vs. 18). Together with מָרוֹם (vs. 19) these terms express the God of heaven metaphor. The warrior metaphor is predominantly portrayed in vss. 18-22 with expressions like רֶכֶב אֱלֹהִים (vs. 18), שָׁבִיתָ שֶּׁבִי (vs. 19), and יִמְחַץ רֹאשׁ אֹיְבָיו (vs. 22). There are other occurrences of the God of heaven and warrior

[354] Cf. our remarks to Psa 29:3.

[355] Cf. our remarks to Psa 21:9.

metaphors in this psalm, but we have taken this passage, since it represents a cross-section of the psalm in which the two metaphors appear in an overlapping fashion.

Another interesting feature concerning the language of Psa 68:15-22 is the high frequency of divine names and epithets: שַׁדַּי (1x), אֱלֹהִים (5x), יְהוָה (2x), אֲדֹנָי (3x), יָהּ (1x), and אֵל (3x). These occur on their own or in combination with divine epithets, [356] while the rest of the psalm presents a similar picture.[357]

4.3.7.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 68

The literary structure of the psalm is somewhat difficult to determine, since it appears to consist of a conglomerate of different images. This has led Albright (1950:1-39) to the assumption that Psa 68 represents an index of beginning lines of early Israelite poems (cf. note 357). Although there is no evidence within the OT for such a practice, numerous commentators have accepted this view of the psalm. On the other side of the spectrum of interpretation there are endeavours to emphasize the unity of the poem and demonstrate its underlying coherent theme or occasion.[358] However, the *Sitz im Leben* for this poem remains to be highly doubtful[359] which has induced scholars to approach the text from a more literary perspective. Fokkelman divides Psa 68 into three large sections (vss. 2-11; 12-24; and 25-36), eight stanzas, and sixteen strophes (1990:75). He solves the question of unity in demonstrating *inclusio*: vs. 5 // vs. 33-34. However, even the poetic structure is far from being consistent - one just has to look at the syllabic and colometric variations of the text Fokkelman provides (1990:74; cf.

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[356] For divine epithets, cf. the semantic notes above.

[357] For the distribution of divine names and epithets throughout Psa 68, cf. Freedman (1976:82-85) who correlates the variety of divine appellations to the hypothetical model proposed by Albright, i.e., Psa 68 is an index or "catalogue of *Incipits* or first lines of early Israelite songs dating from the period between the thirteenth and tenth centuries" (Freedman, 1976:82).

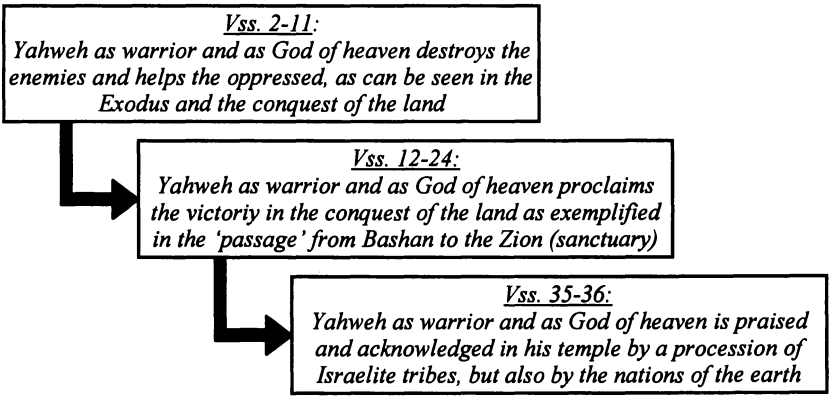
[358] The question of the occasion for the psalm has been stressed to the expense of its subject matter. Gray identifies Psa 68 as a cantata for the Israelite autumn festival which originated in a cultic activity at Mount Tabor celebrating the victory of Zebulun and Naphtali in Jdg 4:6 (1977:20). Gray identifies Bashan in Psa 68 with Mt. Hermon which then in turn would point to Mt. Tabor (Psa 89:13). However, there is no clear evidence for such an identification, rather, Bashan seems to refer to the mountainous area in Transjordan south of Mt. Hermon.

[359] Tate comments on general problems pertaining to the cultic understanding of psalms which becomes especially prominent in the interpretation of Psa 68: "The argumentation in the cultic interpretation of psalms suffers from a circular nature in which worship acts and contexts are reconstructed from the texts of the psalms themselves and then used to explain the texts from which they are derived" (1990:175).

Tate, 1990:173), although it would not be correct to expect a clinically rigid poetic structure from Hebrew verse. We would nevertheless agree with Fokkelman *et al.* that Psa 68 represents a unity.

Psa 68 lends itself to attempts of dating, since there are definite references to historical person groups, geographical names, and other early Israelite poems. There is surprising consensus to date the psalm into the pre-exilic period, often as early as the beginning of the monarchy.[360] The affinity to the Song of Deborah in Jdg 5 found in vss. 12-19 would facilitate a date between the 10th and 9th centuries B.C., i.e., during the Early Monarchy.

It appears advisable to approach the question of the structure of Psa 65 from a literary perspective, yet without trying to superimpose an inflexible structural system on it. The three sections mentioned by Fokkelman seem to reflect the general structure of Psa 65 (**Graph 12**).[361]



Graph 12: Literary structure of Psa 68

Since the passage in Psa 68:15-22 has been isolated for statistical reasons (see above), there will be no further discussion of the structure of that passage, except for the fact that it forms part of the second section and thus reflects the theme of that part of the psalm.

4.3.7.4. Comment on Psalm 68:15-22

Psa 68:12-14 form the preceding vss. to our passage, and their content serves as an introduction to vs. 15f. Yahweh is celebrated as the victorious

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[360] Gray has examined the vocabulary, phraseology, morphology, and syntax of the poem, and arrives at an early date for Psa 68 (1977:18-19). Cf. also Vlaardingerbroek's more detailed presentation of the evidence (1973:196-213).

[361] Albright's hypothesis does not convince, since one can detect logical sequences between the various vss.; e.g., vss. 8-12 are closely linked to each other logically, but also grammatically.

conqueror of the land after he has led Israel out of Egypt through the desert (vss. 8-11). The imagery evokes associations with the battles connected to the conquest of the land.[362] Keel has aptly summarized the exegetical meaning of vss. 12-14:

> Jahwe lässt sein "Theophanie-Wort" ergehen (Ps 46,7; 76,9; Jes 33,3...). Kaum ist es erklungen, wird eine Schar von Freudenbotinnen (Tauben) sichtbar, die die Botschaft von der Flucht der feindlichen Könige in alle Welt hinaus tragen soll. Auch wenn sich Israel, wie dereinst Ruben, passiv verhält, wird dieser Sieg doch errungen und die Taubenflügel werden für den Botenflug festlich geschmückt (1977b:36).[363]

Vs. 15: Shaddai's[364] victory over the 'kings' is illustrated by the falling snow on Mt. Zalmon.[365] The parallel structure of the two verbs פרשׂ 'to scatter' and שׁלג 'to snow' suggest that Yahweh's deeds of judgement are reflected in the falling snow. In Job 38:22-23 an identification of snow with Yahweh's judgements is found.[366] The imagery is enhanced furthermore by the contrast of the white snow as it covers the black volcanic rock of Mt. Zalmon, denoting the supremacy of Yahweh which is elaborated in the following vss. through the mountain motif.

Vs. 16: From Mt. Zalmon in the preceding vs. the Bashan mountain range[367] now comes into focus and is described in superlative terminology (הַר־אֱלֹהִים), alluding to the imagery of mountains as the dwelling of the gods (cf. Isa 14:13). The Bashan mountains are portrayed as being הַר גַּבְנֻנִּים, i.e., mountains with many peaks which corresponds to the cone-like appearance of the volcanic peaks of the Bashan mountains. The geography is strictly Transjordan which would substantiate the interpretation of the preceding

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[362] If one takes the toponomy of the psalm into consideration, one could establish a relationship with the area of Transjordan and the related battles (cf. Num 21:21-35; Deu 2:24-3:11).

[363] Keel convincingly demonstrates that the כנפי יונה 'wings of a dove' in vs. 14 do not refer to a part of the booty, nor to a bird-like object used in Israelite worship, or a standard of the goddess Astarte (for further interpretations, cf. Tate, 1990:179; Keel, 1977b:31-34), but rather should be understood as reference to the custom of ornating the wings of doves after a victory and letting them fly as messengers of the good news (Keel, 1977b:34f.).

[364] Although the etymology of שׁדי remains uncertain, it is not astonishing to find this divine name connected to the imagery of mountains.

[365] For an identification of Mt. Zalmon, cf. note 325.

[366] More familiar is the identification of hail with God's judgement (cf. Isa 30:30; Eze 13:13).

[367] The identification of הר־בשׁן with Mt. Tabor (on account of הר־אלהים as the 'mountain of God') does not convince, since הר has to be understood in terms of a mountain range, as becomes apparent from the interchangeable pl. form in vs. 17. If Mt. Bashan in vs. 16 refers to Yahweh's chosen mountain, the whole contrast imagery of vss. 16-17 becomes superfluous (cf. Keel, 1977b:19f., n. 1).

passage as referring to the conquest battles East of the Jordan river. In the nominal sentence structure of vs. 16 the fourfold repetition of הַר stands out.
Vs. 17: The four הַר of vs. 16 are summarized in the sudden pl. הָרִים גַּבְנֻנִּים. We would suggest a strong polemic in the language usage of vss. 16-17. While the mountains of the gods are numerous and unspecified, Yahweh's mountain is only mentioned once and set in contrast with the other mountains by means of the added article which appears for the first time in connection with the mountain motif (הָהָר חָמַד אֱלֹהִים). In a personification of nature, the mountains of many peaks watch with envy the mountain God has chosen for his abode.
Vs. 18: God has chosen Zion as his mountain, and he proceeds toward it in an entourage of the heavenly host. The warrior metaphor is represented in the depiction of God's innumerable chariots and his angelic forces, the 'bright ones', although this interpretation of שְׁנְאָן has to remain a tentative one. As Israel has moved from the wilderness into the promised land, God moves from the mountain of the Exodus, i.e., Mt. Sinai, toward his sanctuary which is located on Mt. Zion.[368]
Vs. 19: God ascending to the height (עָלִיתָ לַמָּרוֹם) which is often used synonymously for heaven in the OT (cf. Job 16:19; Psa 71:19; 93:4; 102:20), is a motif which is indicative for the God of heaven metaphor.[369] The imagery is that of an ancient Near Eastern victory procession during which 'captives' are displayed and tributes are received.[370] Even those who are in rebellion against God (סוֹרְרִים) are ready to submit to the divine authority of יָהּ.
Vs. 20: The psalmist calls his audience to daily praise of the הָאֵל יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ, stressing through this divine epithet God's deeds of deliverance with an

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[368] Reading with BHS בא מסיני בקדש instead of בם סיני בקדש as found in MT.

[369] Comments Jeremias on vss. 18-19: "In diesen Versen brechen alle räumlichen Schranken zusammen. Der Zion, in seiner äußerlichen Größe wenig eindrucksvoll (V. 16) und zu bestimmter geschichtlicher Stunde mit der Ladeüberführung von Jahwe als Wohnsitz gewählt, freilich nun 'für immer' (V. 17) - dieser Zion wird zum himmlischen Heiligtum. Der in ihn einziehende, von seinen unzähligen himmlischen Heerscharen begleitete Himmelsgott aber ist kein anderer als der unter der Erschütterung von Himmel und Erde als Helfer in der Wüste und in den Kämpfen der Frühzeit erfahrene 'Der vom Sinai' (V. 9; Ri 5, 5). Sinai, Zion und Himmel fließen im Heiligtum ineinander" (1987:77).

[370] Isserlin discusses the well-known ivory plaque from Megiddo stemming from the 12th century B.C. and its implications for Psa 68:14 which shows "a victorious ruler returning in triumph, preceded by music and followed by captives led along, while on the left he is shown having taken his seat on the royal throne" (1971:5). Cf. also the relief of Sheshonk from Karnak which shows the god Amon presenting the pharaoh with captives (Keel, 1972:pl. 22).

emphasis on the uniqueness of the God of Israel.[371] The imagery of יַעֲמָס־לָנוּ is that of loading a carrier animal with goods on its back, i.e., God loading his blessings onto his people.

Vs. 21: The לְמָוֶת תּוֹצָאוֹת are 'death's extreme boundaries' and denote the control God has over death. Interestingly, the term תּוֹצָאָה is mostly used in the designation of the boundaries during the conquest and distribution of land(cf. Num 34:4,5,8,9,12; Jos 15:4,7,11; 16:3,8; 17:9,18; 18:12,14,19; and 19:14,22,29,33), and refers to the end of the territory. As God designated the boundaries between the people of Israel and their enemies, he also defines the boundaries between life and death.[372] Thus another reference to the era of the conquest of the land is made here.

Vs. 22: The final vs. of our passage once more stresses the warrior metaphor in using the well-known imagery of shattering the enemy's head (cf. 32:42) which is repeated in parallel style in the second colon of the vs. (cf. Keel, 1972:271f., fig. 397) while מחץ serves as the predicate for both colons. The breaking of the skull is a sign of subjugation and is rarely understood as a literal depiction of warfare.

Vss. 23-24 continue the depiction of God as warrior, but the focus shifts to the recipients of his acts of deliverance, and thus are not of prime interest for our purposes.

Psa 68:15-22 represent an interesting overlapping depiction of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors centering around the imagery of the Exodus, the conquest, and the distribution of the land, especially from a Transjordan perspective. The mountain motif is presented via a dichotic depiction of the mountains of Bashan with many peaks (representing other gods?) versus the mountain of God where his sanctuary is located. As God has

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[371] Rendtorff, in a recent article, has examined the usage of אל as an Israelite divine appellation in the OT which is motivated by the following considerations: "Das vorherrschende Interesse an den Beziehungen der israelitischen Religion zu der ihrer Nachbarn hat also m.E. zu einer Überbetonung bestimmter tatsächlicher oder vermuteter Parallelen zwischen biblischen und außerbiblischen Texten geführt, wobei nicht selten der Kontext innerhalb der Hebräischen Bibel vernachlässigt wurde" (1994:5). He comes to the conclusion that אל in the OT functions as a generic term which is often qualified by a noun or an adjective, and cannot be interpreted from the perspective of a Canaanite divinity: "Allen unterschiedlichen Formen des Gebrauchs von אל, die in diesem Abschnitt behandelt worden sind, ist gemeinsam, daß sie bestimmte charakterisierende Aussagen über den einen Gott, Jhwh, machen. Das Wort אל fungiert hier als eine allgemeine Bezeichnung für 'Gott', die es ermöglicht, durch hinzugefügte Attribute bestimmte Aspekte der Vorstellung davon, wie ein 'Gott' sein oder sich verhalten könnte, zu betonen und herauszustellen" (1994:11).

[372] We find it difficult to understand מות as a reference to the Canaanite god Mot (Tate, 1990:181) which is Ba'al's counterpart in Canaanite mythology, since there is no indication of mythologization of the text up to now.

accompanied Israel throughout their wanderings in the wilderness, he moves with them into the promised land and transfers the attributes of Sinai to Zion, namely, as being the mountain of God. This historical event has been commemorated and made available for the audience of the psalmist.

4.3.8. Psalm 83:14-18

Although Psa 83 does not belong to the group of psalms which are at the center of academic interest,[373] it nevertheless depicts the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in an overlapping fashion, and should thus be included in our discussion.[374] For the present study we will limit our exegetical considerations to the passage vss. 14-18.[375]

4.3.8.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 83:14-18

Psalm 83:14-18	Translation
14a אֱלֹהַי שִׁיתֵמוֹ כַגַּלְגַּל	My God, make them like thistledown,[376]
14b כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ׃	like[377] chaff before the wind.
15a כְּאֵשׁ תִּבְעַר־יָעַר	As fire consumes the forest,
15b וּכְלֶהָבָה תְּלַהֵט הָרִים	and as the flame scorches[378] the mountains.
16a כֵּן תִּרְדְּפֵם בְּסַעֲרֶךָ	In like manner you shall pursue[379] them with your whirlwind,
16b וּבְסוּפָתְךָ תְבַהֲלֵם׃	and with your storm you shall terrify[380] them.

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[373] A list of recent publications dealing with Psa 83 as a whole, or with aspects of it, include the following: Buss (1963:382-392); Mac Laurin (1975:27-45); Costacurta (1983:518-541); Lahav (1983:111-112); Ogden (1983:97-106); Margalith (1985:109-111); Gosse (1993:9-12); and Brettler (1993:135-165).

[374] We would agree with Brettler who motivates his choice and/or exclusion of psalms for a discussion of the warrior metaphor: "... the focus of scholarship on the image of YHWH as warrior in Psalms 18, 24, and 68 has obscured the predominance of the metaphor's use throughout the Psalter" (1993:139). Thus in our study we have tried to provide a representative choice of psalms which reflect the usage of the metaphor throughout the psalm. Although we have classified Psa 83 originally as belonging to the God of heaven metaphor, with Brettler we also notice the warrior metaphor as present in the psalm. The following discussion will confirm this classification.

[375] We bypass the imagery of the enemy communicated in vss. 7-13 through geographical and personal names which mainly alludes to events during the time of the Judges.

[376] Often כגלגל is translated 'like whirling dust' (Tate, 1990:343), but גלגל refers rather to "the wheel-shaped dried calix of the thistle Gundelia Tournefortii which borne by the wind causes the shying of horses" (Koehler and Baumgartner, 1985:181).

[377] With the Syrian translation, the Targumim, and the Vulgate, BHS suggests adding the conjunction at the beginning of the second colon as in vss. 15-18 and read וכקש.

[378] The two impfs. in vs. 15 are referring to the initial imp. in vs. 14, and are indicative of a substantial action (Michel, 1960:111, §16, 4), and thus are rendered in the present tense as expressing a simultaneous action level.

17a	מַלֵּא פְנֵיהֶם קָלוֹן	Fill their faces with shame,
17b	וְיבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה׃	that[381] they may seek[382] your name, o Yahweh.[383]
18a	יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ	May they be ashamed and may they be terrified
18b	עֲדֵי־עַד	for ever and ever,[384]
18c	וְיַחְפְּרוּ וְיֹאבֵדוּ׃	and may they be abashed and may they perish.[385]

The text of Psa 83:14-18 does not present any major problems for the translation of the passage. The colons are consistently short and mostly of parallel structure.

4.3.8.2. The Language of Psalm 83:14-18

Brettler observes with regard to the language of Psa 83: "Although terms from the semantic fields of strength never appear in the psalm, the image of God as a warrior is in the background throughout" (1993:150). Beyond Brettler, we would suggest that an examination of the 11 verbal and 14 nominal forms of our passage will demonstrate that the presence of the warrior metaphor does not only lie on concept-level, but is also reflected in the choice of language.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
שִׁיתֵמוֹ	Psa 83:14	שׁית	to put, set, appoint, make	Expressing the notion of exercising control or rule, often used to express God's authoritative action (Job 38:11; Psa 8:6; Psa 21:10). Interestingly, half of the total number of occurrences in the OT are found within poetic literature.
תִּבְעַר	Psa 83:15	בער	to consume,	Describing a process of destruction through fire; also the ignition of a fire. Figuratively for

[379] Understanding תרדפם as a jussive form.

[380] Cf. note 379.

[381] The ו introduces a subclause with consecutive or final (purposive) meaning which is indicated through the imp. in the first colon followed by a third person jussive form in the second colon (cf. Jenni, 1981:237).

[382] Understanding ויבקשו as a jussive form.

[383] There have been various suggestions to emendate the second colon, since it does not seem to fit into the context of the first line. Dahood describes the reading of MT as "hardly amenable to coherent exegesis within the immediate context" (1968:277) and thus emends the colon to "and let your Name, Yahweh, avenge itself" (1968:273), drawing the final ו of ויבקשו to the following שמך translating בקש as 'avenge' (cf. Tate, 1990:344). There is, however, nothing in the text that would merit such an emendation which actually complicates MT intelligible reading unnecessarily.

[384] Comments Dahood on the syllabic structure of the vs.: "The phrase *"dē 'ad* connects with both cola, and by hanging it in the middle of the verse we achieve an exact balance of 8:3:8 syllables..." (1968:277).

[385] Consistently we understand the impf. forms of vs. 18 as jussives.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
			burn, burn up, kindle	igniting anger, and the quality of God's wrath (Psa 79:5; 89:47).
תְּלַהֲטֹ	Psa 83:15	להט	to scorch, burn	Describing a process of destruction though fire (Psa 97:3; 106:18; Joe 2:3), the igniting of a fire (Deu 32:22; Job 41:13), or the state of burning (Gen 3:24).
תִּרְדְּפֵם	Psa 83:16	רדף	to pursue, persecute	Verb or linear motion denoting the act of following a person in order to catch up with him. In the psalms often found in contexts of war imagery (Psa 7:2,6; 18:38; 31:16; 35:3; 69:26; 143:3).
תְּבַהֲלֵם וְיִבָּהֲלוּ	Psa 83:16 Psa 83:18	בהל	to terrify (Piel), to be terrified (Niphal)	Emotional state induced in a person denoting extreme discomfort and fear. In the OT the verb is often used to describe despair in battle (Exo 15:15; Jdg 20:41; 2Sa 4:1; 2Ch 32:18; 35:21; Psa 6:10; 48:5; Jer 51:32; Dan 11:44). Job is terrified by God's appearance (Job 23:15,16). Terror at God's judgement (Eze 7:27; Zep 1:18).
מַלֵּא	Psa 83:17	מלא	to fill, accomplish	Quantitative term denoting the process of filling something formerly empty. Here used in a figurative sense in an expression together with פנים, referring to the act of putting somebody to shame, while 'face' serves as a pars pro toto for the whole person.
וִיבַקְשׁוּ	Psa 83:17	בקש	to seek	Mental or physical process of detecting the location of something formerly hidden. 'To seek Yahweh's name' occurs here only as an expression, but should be seen as parallel to the expression בקש יהוה 'to seek the Lord' (Exo 33:7; 1Ch 16:10; Psa 105:3; Pro 28:5; Isa 51:1).
יֵבֹשׁוּ	Psa 83:18	בוש	to be ashamed	Emotional state of feeling shame because of having done something wrong, denoting humiliation. Parallel expressions to our vs., i.e., enemies ashamed, is a common motif in the psalms (Psa 6:11; 25:3; 31:17; 35:4; 40:14; 53:6; 71:13).
וְיֵחָפְרוּ	Psa 83:18	חפר	to be ashamed, be abashed	Emotional state of feeling shame because of having done something wrong, especially through detection, as the etymological affinity to the root חפר 'dig, search, search out, explore' shows (Psa 7:16; 34:6; 35:26).
וְיֹאבֵדוּ	Psa 83:18	אבד	to perish	Process of destruction, often denoting the result of God's judgements (Job 4:9; 8:13) in the destruction of the enemy (Psa 9:4,6; 37:20; 68:3; 80:16).

Table 17: Verbal forms in Psa 83:14-18

The verbal forms of Psa 83:14-18 are clearly reminiscent of war terminology as is apparent from the semantic notes and the recurrences of words found in some of the other psalms already discussed in this chapter (e.g., בער in vs. 15 // Psa 18:9; אבד in vs. 18 // Psa 21:11).

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
אֱלֹהַי	Psa 83:14	אֱלֹהִים	god, Elohim	Divine name, but also a generic term for the designation of the divinity. Here it is used as an appellation with a 1st pers. sing. suffix, which is a common address for God in the psalms (occurs 65 times).
כַּגַּלְגַּל	Psa 83:14	גַּלְגַּל	thistle-down, whirlwind	Plant part, but also as a description of the natural phenomenon of a whirlwind closely related to theophany (Psa 77:19).[386]
כְּקַשׁ	Psa 83:14	קַשׁ	chaff, stubble	Plant part referring to the husks of grain (Exo 5:12). Often associated with the effect of God's judgement (Isa 5:24; Oba 1:18; Mal 3:19), and storm imagery (Isa 40:24; Jer 13:24).
רוּחַ	Psa 83:14	רוּחַ	wind	A physical event, but also referring to non-physical entities like 'spirit', 'breath of life', 'mind', etc. In this context it clearly refers to the physical event of wind. The wind is part of the theophanic event (Psa 18:11).
כְּאֵשׁ	Psa 83:15	אֵשׁ	fire	A natural substance mostly used figuratively in poetic literature for the destructive power of God's anger (Psa 79:5). Often described as flames coming forth from God's mouth as he appears (Psa 29:7; 97:3).
יָעַר	Psa 83:15	יַעַר	forest	Plant name denoting a dense growth of trees covering a large area.
וּכְלֶהָבָה	Psa 83:15	לֶהָבָה	flame	Natural substance, i.e., the burning vapor encompassing an object on fire. For God's punitive actions in war and judgement (Num 21:28; Jer 48:45; Lam 2:3; Eze 21:3); for a designation of lightning (Psa 105:32); for the destructive action of a normal fire (Joe 1:19). Here it stands in parallel position to אֵשׁ.
הָרִים	Psa 83:15	הַר	mountain	Geographical object, high elevation of land, often as a place of refuge (Psa 11:1; 121:1; 125:2). Especially God's holy hill, mount Zion (Psa 2:6; 3:5; 43:3), is mentioned. Mountains are also reminiscent of creation and the cosmic struggle; they fall before God's anger (Psa 104; 144). Mountains are mentioned as the dwelling of god(s).
בְּסַעֲרֶךָ	Psa 83:16	סַעַר	whirl-wind, storm	Natural event referring to sudden and violent gusts of wind, often from varied directions (Psa 55:9). The whirlwind is closely associated with Yahweh in the expression סַעֲרַת יְהוָה (Jer 23:19; 30:23), mainly in context of judgement (Amo 1:14; Jon 1:4).
בְּסוּפָתֶךָ	Psa 83:16	סוּפָה	storm, tempest	Natural event referring to stormy weather with its accompanying features like wind, rain, or cold (Job 21:18; Job 37:9; Isa 21:1). In prophetic literature in contexts of divine judgement and theophany (Isa 17:13; 29:6; 66:15; Jer 4:13; Amo 1:14; Nah 1:3).

[386] Cf. note 376.

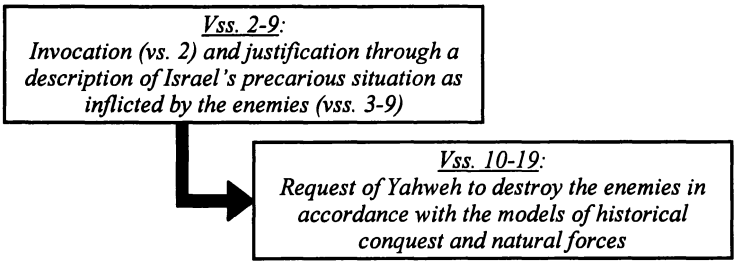
Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
פְּנֵיהֶם	Psa 83:17	פָּנִים	face	Body part. Here used as a pars pro toto for the whole person (Jer 32:4; Eze 3:8; Hos 5:15).
קָלוֹן	Psa 83:17	קָלוֹן	shame, disgrace	Emotional state referring to the painful feeling due to the consciousness of having done or experienced something disgraceful, especially shame as the result of Yahweh's judgement (Jer 13:26; 46:12; Hos 4:7; Nah 3:5).
שְׁמֶךָ	Psa 83:17	שֵׁם	name	Noun of communication referring to the proper designation of a person or an object. The construct chain שֵׁם־יְהוָה functions as the distinguishing mark of Yahweh, a synonymous expression for the presence of Yahweh (cf. Rose, 1992:1002).
יְהוָה	Psa 83:17	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name.

Table 18: Nominal forms in Psa 83:14-18

The nominal forms of Psa 83:14-18 display characteristics of the God of heaven metaphor, also with regard to theophanic features contained in the passage.[387] A relationship in terminology could be established especially with Psa 29:3-9, the description of the divine thunderstorm: אֵשׁ (vs. 15 // Psa 29:7 *et al.*), לֶהָבָה (vs. 15 // Psa 29:7), and יַעַר (vs. 15 // Psa 29:9). In addition to that רוּחַ (vs. 14), סַעַר and סוּפָה (vs. 16) are denotative of the God of heaven metaphor. It appears that the verbal forms of the passage are representative of the warrior metaphor, while the nominal forms are descriptive of the God of heaven metaphor.

4.3.8.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 83

The literary structure of the psalm is indicated by the סֶלָה at the end of vs. 9, dividing the text into two parts, whereas the content structure roughly corresponds to this bipartition, as can be seen from **Graph 13**.



Graph 13: Literary structure of Psa 83

[387] Jeremias includes Psa 83 with the texts that display a strong affinity to the theophany passages in the OT, but since they do not describe the actual appearance of Yahweh they cannot be added to the list of theophanies in the OT (1965:71f.).

The list of nations occurring in Psa 83 has been the subject of numerous discussions, whereas there is, however, no known historical incidence where the recorded nations united in an alliance against Israel (Tate, 1990:345). Gosse (1993:9-12) understands the mentioned nations as a post-exilic continuation of the literary tradition of the 'Oracle against the Nations' found in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel,[388] while other authors have attempted more historically inclined interpretations.[389] While the list clearly alludes to the time of the Judges (vs. 10), it uses, in our consideration, historical motifs from that period in order to create the imagery of an Israel totally surrounded by enemies and their aggression[390] against the small country (Haglund, 1984:61-63).[391] In connection with the list of nations in Psa 83 is the question of dating the psalm. Although it uses old imagery, we would date it with Tate into the late pre-exilic period, since the language exhibits some characteristics of a more developed Hebrew verse technique (1990:345, 478f.). Since the threatening powers of that period are not mentioned, the author of the psalm might have used the historical motifs from the time of the Judges[392] as a simile for a similar precarious situation just before the exile.[393]

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[388] In comparing Psa 83 with Isa 17:12-14; 62:6-7; and Eze 21:37 (cf. Eze 25), Gosse comes to the following conclusion: "En conclusion, nous voyons que le Ps 83 a été developpé à partir d'Is 62, 6-7 et qu'il est à situer dans la mouvance de la tradition des Oracles contre les Nations d'Isaïe et d'Ezéchiel, dans le cadre d'une justification de leur rôle rédactionnel" (1993:12).

[389] E.g., Lahav, who identifies the גם־אשור in vs. 9 with a desert tribe mentioned in 2Sa 2:9 that invaded Israelite territory during the early monarchy, but which was conquered by Saul (cf. 1Ch 5:10,19-22). See also Margalith, who convincingly demonstrates that the עין־דאר of vs. 11 could have already been in existence during the time of the Judges, and is not a historical imprecision (1985:110).

[390] Costacurta identifies the aggression of the enemies against Israel as the most prominent motif in Psa 83, which is ultimately directed against the God of Israel: "Il primo dato che emerge verte su Dio come vero destinatario dell'aggressione dei nemici" (1983:538).

[391] Comments Tate: "Perhaps insufficient attention has been paid to the possibility that the peoples listed come from a rough circle around Israel, beginning in the south, up to the Transjordan region, over to Tyre (and Gebal), and back down the coast to Philistia" (1990:347).

[392] Comments Haglund, who examines the historical motifs in the Hebrew psalter: "Ps 83 may be dated to the time prior to the Exile and refers to the time of the judges, i.e., to the time when the concept of the Holy War was vivid" (1984:126).

[393] For further remarks on literary features of Psa 83, cf. Costacurta (1983:518-521), who identifies various chiastic patterns and structures.

4.3.8.4. Comment on Psalm 83:14-18

After the repeated request in vss. 10-13 applies the model of early Israelite history in order to communicate and invoke Yahweh's supremacy over the nations, the psalmist now turns to the model of Yahweh employing natural forces for the subjugation of the enemies.[394]

Vs. 14: The vs. opens with the personalized address אֱלֹהַי, whereas the identity of that 'I' cannot be determined from the context.[395] In using the imperative form שִׁיתֵמוֹ the urgency of the situation is emphasized and God's authoritative action is requested. The comparisons כַּגַּלְגַּל and כְּקַשׁ לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ stand in parallel position, and are referring to the imagery of plant parts turned and whirled around (cf. the etymology of גַּלְגַּל 'wheel, whirlwind, thistledown') before gusts of violent wind. From Psa 18:11 and 77:19 it is evident that the whirlwind as a natural atmospheric event is closely associated with theophanic imagery and thus with the God of heaven metaphor.

Vs. 15: 'Chaff' or 'stubble' is used in various places in connection with the destruction through fire (Isa 5:24; 47:14; Oba 1:18; Mal 3:19), thus creating an effective link between the motifs of vs. 14 and 15. Fire consuming a forest and setting a mountain ablaze is part of the fire imagery which has repeatedly been employed as a communicator of the God of heaven metaphor (Psa 21:9-10; 29:7). Especially the affinity to Psa 29 becomes apparent, in which the destructive effects of a thunderstorm moving over Palestine are described and associated with the קוֹל יְהוָה.

Vs. 16: Together with the preceding vs., this vs. forms a cumulative simile (cf. Watson, 1984:258f.), with the climax being expressed through the introductory כֵּן. While the foregoing images served as comparisons, now the natural forces of the divine storm are unleashed. Comments Brettler: "However, it is not clear if the סער, 'tempest,' and סופה, 'storm,' are merely images for God's great strength as a warrior ..., in which he is given the destructive powers of nature itself, or whether these refer to a divine theophany as in Nah 1:3..." (1993:150). From the sentence structure (a series of comparisons in vss. 14-15, concluded by כֵּן in vs. 16), and from the fact that the psalmist is using jussive forms, we would suggest that vs. 16 is a request for an actual theophany, i.e., for an intervention of the God of heaven as a warrior on behalf of his surrounded people. We would agree with Brettler that here in this psalm Yahweh as warrior is not attributed

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[394] Vs. 13 has to be read in close connection to vs. 5, and describes the existential threat Israel is facing from the enemies.

[395] If we hypothesize a pre-exilic setting with the imminent threat of national defeat, the speaker certainly could be the king of Israel (cf. Tate, 1990:348).

with human implements of war, but "has meteorological phenomena as his weapons" (1993:150). The force of the warrior imagery is furthermore enhanced through the choice of verbal forms in this vs.: רדף 'pursue' and בהל 'terrify' which clearly are associated with war terminology (cf. semantic notes).

Vs. 17: As part of the procedure of war, the humiliation of the enemy after his defeat is evoked in this vs., a similar situation as described in the imagery of the victory procession in Psa 68:19 (cf. our remarks there). קָלוֹן only appears here in the psalms, and is usually associated with Wisdom literature,[396] while it denotes the utter humiliation and shame as a result of Yahweh's judgements (Jer 13:26; Hos 4:7).[397] Nevertheless, the psalmist endeavours that the enemies will acknowledge Yahweh, i.e., יְבַקְשׁוּ שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה.

Vs. 18: The second colon of vs. 17 creates a certain tension with 18c - on the one hand the enemies are supposed to seek Yahweh's name (cf. also vs. 19), but on the other hand the psalmist wishes their utter destruction (עבר in 18c). This ambiguity has been observed also in Psa 46 where the nations cease to be enemies through the acknowledgement of Yahweh's supremacy, who surprisingly does not destroy them, but terminates wars and destroys weapons instead of people. Consequently, the enemies lose their threat for Israel if they acknowledge Yahweh, if not, they are predestined for utter destruction. The sequence of the two verbal forms יֵבֹשׁוּ וְיִבָּהֲלוּ serves as a hyperbolic hendiadys, expressing the utter humiliation of the enemy, although they are not completely synonymous.

Psa 83 serves as a showpiece for the overlapping of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, and one can summarize with Brettler:

> The metaphor [God as warrior and as God of heaven] allows the psalmist to expect YHWH's intervention (v. 2). It is the reason why the nations who are Israel's enemies are explicitly called God's enemies (v. 3), and their conspiracy an alliance

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396 Mac Laurin has connected Psa 83 with Babylonian incantation formulas used in exorcism, and tries to demonstrate that the superscription of Psa 83 לאסף is not referring to an individual, but to a "hereditary caste of professional musicians and prophets" (1975:39) which were functioning as exorcists. He concludes that "it seems not unlikely that the words Joseph and Asaph are connected with the concept of magic and may denote members of a guild of magicians of great antiquity" (1975:45). This, however, seems to be a very 'long shot', since there is no indicator of any magical rituals in our psalm whatsoever. Comments Weiser on the requests for the enemies' punishment in vss. 10-16: "Aber weder für die selbständige magische Kraft der Handlung noch des Wortes ist im Alten Testament Platz neben der alleinigen Macht Gottes; aus den einstigen Flüchen sind Bitten geworden und an Stelle der magischen Analogie ist die Aktualisierung des Gotteshandelns, die Vergegenwärtigung seiner heilsgeschichtlichen Rettungstaten getreten, mit denen er seine Macht über die Feinde erweisen soll" (1959:370).

397 Interestingly, in these references קלון often appears, with openly displayed nakedness as the ultimate sign of humiliation in the ANE (cf. note 370).

(ברית) against YHWH (v. 6). YHWH's past actions as warrior in Israel's behalf are recalled (vv. 10-11), and storm, fire, and possibly theophany imagery are used to express the divine weapons (1993:150f.).

4.3.9. Psalm 144:5-8

An exegetical discussion of Psa 144 may result in an exercise in relecture or anthology,[398] since the psalm incorporates traditions from other psalms, foremost from Psa 18, although it soon becomes evident that the psalm did not borrow material in a mechanistic way, but rather regrouped and also reinterpreted it from a certain perspective.[399] For the purpose of the present study it may thus be possible to trace a development of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors diachronically. We have isolated vss. 5-8 for our exegetical discussion, although vs. 8 does not contribute significantly to the understanding of our metaphors, but has been included since it connects grammatically to vs. 7.

4.3.9.1. Text and Translation of Psalm 144:5-8

Psalm 144:5-8	Translation
יְהוָה הַט־שָׁמֶיךָ וְתֵרֵד 5a	Yahweh, spread apart[400] your heavens,[401] so that you may come down;[402]
גַּע בֶּהָרִים וְיֶעֱשָׁנוּ׃ 5b	touch the mountains, so that they may smoke.

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[398] Loretz has summarized the history of research for Psa 144 which has been dominated by the question of unity, while the proponents of an anthological interpretation favour the unity of the poem. Although the psalm is generally classified as a royal psalm, supposedly with a post-exilic date of origin, the question is if the description of the king in Psa 144 can be correlated to any existing monarch since the monarchy was no longer in existence at that time, or if we are dealing with an idealized view of kingship with messianic overtones as a sort of literary fiction (Loretz, 1988a:177-181). Besides Loretz's discussion (1988a:177-208; cf. also 209-224), studies on Psa 144 include the following: Baumann (1950:148-152); Habel (1972:417-430); Eaton (1976:127f.); Haglund (1984:85f.); and Tournay (1984:520-530).

[399] In saying that we already presuppose a dependency of Psa 144 on Psa 18, and not vice versa (e.g., Eaton, 1976:128). The linguistic evidence would point to such a direction of development. Comments Baumann: "Das Lied ist keine einfache Nachahmung des 18. Psalms, im Einzelnen keine unmittelbare, mechanische Entlehnung. Es arbeitet zwar mit überkommenem Stoff, den es vornehmlich, aber keineswegs ausschließlich, dem 18. Psalm entnimmt, aber ist dabei auf straffste Zusammenfassung und zugleich auf Wechsel und scharfe Abgrenzung der Motive, ja auf Gegenüberstellung bedacht, wie sie nur in einer Komposition möglich ist" (1950:148).

[400] Habel connects the Hiphil imp. of נטה to creation terminology, denoting the pitching of the heavens as a "preparation of a unique domain of Yahweh for his heavenly theophanies. The heavens are 'pitched' to be his cosmic tent where he appears in order to create ... Finally, the 'pitching' of the heavens by Yahweh is not merely viewed as a past primordial cosmic event, but also as a *revelatio continua* which is part of his *creatio continua* [his italics] and his saving intervention through cult or history" (1972:430).

6a בְּרוֹק בָּרָק וּתְפִיצֵם	Flash forth lightning and scatter them,[403]
6b שְׁלַח חִצֶּיךָ וּתְהֻמֵּם׃	Send your arrows and confuse them.[404]
7a שְׁלַח יָדֶיךָ מִמָּרוֹם	Stretch out your hand[405] from the height,
7b פְּצֵנִי וְהַצִּילֵנִי	set me free and deliver me[406]
7c מִמַּיִם רַבִּים	from mighty waters,
7d מִיַּד בְּנֵי נֵכָר׃	from the hand of foreigners,
8a אֲשֶׁר פִּיהֶם דִּבֶּר־שָׁוְא	whose mouth speaks lies,
8b וִימִינָם יְמִין שָׁקֶר׃	and their right hand is a hand of deception.[407]

The text of Psa 144:5-8 does not present any major difficulties for the translation of the passage, but the tendency of various commentators and also BHS to bring the text into conformity with the text of Psa 18 has to be noted, although the differences between the two texts become increasingly apparent (cf. below).

However, the imagery seems more likely to refer to the preparatory action of spreading apart the clouds like a curtain in order to descend from heaven, although the language certainly is reminiscent of creation terminology and cannot be completely dissociated from it.

401 Two Hebrew mss., the LXX, the Syriac translation, and Targumim read שמים instead of the personalized שמיך found in MT. This might be an attempt to adjust Psa 144 to Psa 18:10.

402 We understand ותרד as an indirect cohortative following a direct volitive mood (imperative), expressing not consecution, but rather purpose as in Gen 27:4 (Joüon, 1991:381, §116). This would correspond to the parallel construction in 5b, and also clarify the action of Yahweh spreading apart the heavens.

403 There is a certain ambivalence in the usage of the personal suffixes in this vs. (cf. our comments on Psa 18:15). However, here in Psa 144 there is no mentioning of the enemies beforehand to which the suffixes could refer. Thus, we would take them with Dahood as references to the preceding nouns (1970:330), understanding ברק as a collective sing.

404 As a context sensitive decision we take the sequence of imperative impf. (jussive) in this vs. as expressing consecutive action.

405 MT reads a dual here, but many mss. and the ancient versions have only the sing. form ידך.

406 From comparison with Psa 18:17 BHS suggests to read המשני 'take me' instead of the two imperatives פצני והצילני. Loretz follows this emendation and thus combines 7b and 7c, then he inserts 10c plus 11a before 7d: "Der Text von V. 10 (Schluß) und 11 ist demnach als eine am Rande nachgetragene und dorthin geratene Variante von V. 7b.c zu verstehen" (1988a:190). This, however, does not seem necessary, and from our understanding of the psalm as an innovative reworking of older material, we would retain MT without trying to make it conform to Psa 18.

407 The expression refers to a "breach of political alliance earlier ratified by oath and accompanying gesture (cf. Deut 32:40)" (Allen, 1983:288).

4.3.9.2. The Language of Psalm 144:5-8

For the discussion of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in our passage we will limit our semantic notes on vss. 5-7, since vs. 8 does not seem to merit any further results with regard to our metaphors. There are a total number of 11 verbal and 11 nominal forms contained in this passage.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
הַט	Psa 144:5	נטה	to stretch, spread out, bow	A non-linear horizontal or downward movement. Figuratively in the standard expression 'incline your/my ear' in the Hiphil (Psa 45:10; 49:5). In theophany passages (God dividing the clouds before he descends), best translated with 'spread apart' (Psa 18:10; 144:5).[408]
וְתֵרֵד	Psa 144:5	ירד	to descend, go down	Verb of motion, expressing a downward direction of movement. It is mostly used figuratively in poetic literature denoting the process of dying (Job 7:9; 17:16; Psa 22:30).
גַּע	Psa 144:5	נגע	to touch	Sensory event denoting the coming into contact of two objects. In poetic literature it often refers to God's judgements (Job 1:11; 2:5; 19:21; Psa 73:14). The same terminology is used in Psa 104:32.
וְיֶעֱשָׁנוּ	Psa 144:5	עשן	to smoke	Physical event referring to the ascent of the atmospheric object smoke. Often associated with God's anger and connected to theophany (Exo 19:18; Deu 29:19; Psa 74:1; 80:5). The terminology follows Psa 104:32.
בְּרוֹק	Psa 144:6	ברק	to flash lightning	Referring to the atmospheric event of lightning. Used only here as a verb in MT, although the affinity to Psa 18:15 is noticeable.[409]
וּתְפִיצֵם	Psa 144:6	פוץ	to scatter, disperse	A linear movement, causing objects or persons to be redistributed over a certain area. In theophanic passages associated with the dispersing results of God's lightning, figuratively, dispersing his enemies (Job 37:11; Psa 18:15; 68:2).
שְׁלַח שְׁלַח	Psa 144:6 Psa 144:7	שלח	to send, stretch out	A linear movement, causing an object or a person to travel from one place to another. The expression is identical to Psa 18:15, except for the change of the 3rd to the 2nd person with the volitive form.
וּתְהֻמֵּם	Psa 144:6	המם	to confuse, discomfit	Causing the emotional state of discomfort and confusion in somebody else, especially in enemies during war (Exo 14:24). In poetic literature it only appears in the two parallel theophanic passages (Psa 18:15; Psa 144:6).

[408] In contrast to Psa 18:10 the form appears here in the Hiphil which motivated Cross and Freedman to vocalize MT in Psa 18:10 as a Hiphil (1953:24, n. 24). The Hiphil does not seem to be creation-oriented (Allen, 1983:287).

[409] Cf. our remarks to the translation of Psa 18:15.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
פְּצֵנִי	Psa 144:7	פצה	to set free, open (mouth)	Verb of non-linear movement referring to the opening of the mouth (Gen 4:11; Jdg 11:35; Psa 22:14). Releasing the control over an object or person only in Psa 144:7,10,11.
וְהַצִּילֵנִי	Psa 144:7	נצל	to deliver, rescue	Verb referring to the restoration of a former state of safety. Used as a standard expression in the psalms for the deliverance of the psalmist from his enemies by God (Psa 7:2; 18:18,49).

Table 19: Verbal forms in Psa 144:5-7

The verbal forms of Psa 144:5-7 show a definite affinity to the language of Psa 18. The following agreements could be established: נטה vs. 5 // Psa 18:10; ירד vs. 5 // Psa 18:10; נגע vs. 5 // Psa 104:32; עשן vs. 5 // Psa 104:32; פרץ vs. 6 // Psa 18:15; שׁלח vs. 6 // Psa 18:15; נצל vs. 7 // Psa 18:18,49. These parallels are, however, not verbatim, but exhibit various changes, such as the change of verbal conjugations (vs. 5 - הַט Hiphil // Psa 18:10 - יֶט Qal), but especially the verbal mood changes from the indicative in Psa 18 to the volitive in Psa 144 expressed by the various imperatives and jussives.

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
יְהוָה	Psa 144:5	יְהוָה	Yahweh	Divine name. Here used as a vocative.
שָׁמֶיךָ	Psa 144:5	שָׁמַיִם	heavens	Geographical object, denoting the space above the earth. Also God's dwelling place (Job 16:19; 22:12; Psa 2:4). Similar expression to Psa 18:10 except for the personal suffix.
בֶּהָרִים	Psa 144:5	הַר	mountain	Geographical object, high elevation of land, often as a place of refuge (Psa 11:1; 121:1; 125:2). Especially God's holy hill, mount Zion (Psa 2:6; 3:5; 43:3), is mentioned. Mountains are also reminiscent of creation and the cosmic struggle, they fall before God's anger (Psa 104; 144). Mountains are mentioned as the dwelling of god(s). Identical expression as in Psa 104:32, except for the change of verbal mood.
בָּרָק	Psa 144:6	בָּרָק	lightning	Physical atmospheric event, often accompanying the appearance of God from heaven (Exo 19:16; Psa 77:18; 97:4; 144:6; Zec 9:14). Also: a brightly shining object (Eze 21:20; Dan 10:6).
חִצֶּיךָ	Psa 144:6	חֵץ	arrow	Weapon. Figuratively, arrows epitomize God's judgment (Psa 38:3; 45:5; 64:8; Eze 5:16). Also: lightning accompanying the appearance of God from heaven (Psa 18:15; 77:18; Hab 3:11; Zec 9:14).
יָדֶיךָ מִיָּד	Psa 144:7 Psa 144:7	יָד	hand	Body part, with reference to God ('your hand') often meaning dominion and power (Psa 31:16; 109:27), or denoting his acts of judgement (Job

Form	Reference	Root	Meaning	Semantic Notes
				2:5; 30:21; Psa 44:3). Note the parallelism between 'arrows' and 'hand' in Psa 38:3.[410]
מִמָּרוֹם	Psa 144:7	מָרוֹם	height	Spatial dimension, denoting the elevated position of a person or object. Synonymous to 'heaven' (Job 16:19; 25:2; Psa 71:19; 102:20), his position of judgement (Psa 7:8; 10:5).
מִמַּיִם	Psa 144:7	מַיִם	waters	A natural substance. It can refer to the waters of creation (Gen 1), to rain (2Sa 21:10; Job 26:8), riverwater (Exo 4:9), seawater (Exo 14:21), etc. There is no inherent mythological connotation attached. This observation also refers to the expression מַיִם רַבִּים which serves as a poetic motif. From the parallel expression in the last colon of the vs. it appears that the מַיִם רַבִּים refer to the hostile nations.[411]
בְּנֵי	Psa 144:7	בֵּן	son, child, descendant	Kinship term. For further description of the expression בְּנֵי נֵכָר see below.
נֵכָר	Psa 144:7	נֵכָר	foreigner, stranger	Group or class of people referring to persons belonging to a socio-political group other than the reference group. In the psalms it appears in the standard expression בְּנֵי נֵכָר to denote foreigners, non-Israelites (Gen 17:27; Exo 12:43; Neh 9:2), often in opposition to Israel (Psa 144:11; Isa 62:8; Eze 44:7).

Table 20: Nominal forms in Psa 144:5-7

Although the nominal forms in Psa 144:5-7 clearly reutilize the language of Psa 18, and also of Psa 104 to a lesser degree (vs. 5b // Psa 104:32), there are also new expressions which could have come about through a reinterpretation of the older text or as an attempt to smooth out the

[410] Interestingly, in the parallel text in Psa 18:17 יד is omitted, leaving a somewhat eclipsed expression behind ישלח ממרום.

[411] Day understands Psa 144:7 (Psa 18:17) as a historization of the chaos waters theme, namely, as an application to nations hostile toward Israel. According to him, the *Chaoskampf* motif has developed into the *Völkerkampf* motif which has its *Sitz im Leben* in the annual autumn festival. Furthermore, he proposes a Canaanite origin for this motif mediated through specific Jebusite traditions (1985:183f.). He, however, comes to the following conclusion with regard to the mythological meaning of these motifs during the time of their usage and its possible demythologization to the level of poetic imagery: "One argument that may favour its having the nature of poetic symbolism is the diverse way in which the imagery is used, the fact that the imagery of the dragon and the sea is not only applied in connection with the creation of the world, but is also historicized, i.e., used to symbolize various hostile nations. In any case, when employed to denote foreign nations it has clearly attained the status of poetic metaphor" (1985:188). When one takes the particular dates of composition for Psa 18 and 144 into consideration, one has to note that this process of demythologization took place at a rather early stage in Israelite history.

deficiencies found in the language of Psa 18: e.g., בְּרוֹק בָּרָק (vs. 6) instead of בְּרָקִים רָב in Psa 18:15, and שְׁלַח יָדֶיךָ מִמָּרוֹם (vs. 7) instead of the somewhat eclipsed יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם in Psa 18:17.[412]

4.3.9.3. Literary Analysis of Psalm 144

The literary dependency of Psa 18 on other material from the Hebrew psalter is the major point of discussion in the interpretation of our psalm. Jeremias contends: "Der Verfasser des königlichen Klage- und Dankliedes Ps.144 war kein origineller Dichter" (1965:25). However, in order to demonstrate the innovative character of Psa 144, the expressions displaying close affinities to other passages will be compared below, while differing formulations will be marked by *italics* in the English translation.[413]

Psa 144:1b	הַמְלַמֵּד יָדַי לַקְרָב	'who trains my hands for *battle*'
Psa 18:35a	מְלַמֵּד יָדַי לַמִּלְחָמָה	'he trains my hands for *war*'
Psa 144:2d	הָרוֹדֵד עַמִּי תַּחְתָּי	'who *subdues my people* under me'
Psa 18:48b	וַיַּדְבֵּר עַמִּים תַּחְתָּי	'and he *subjugates peoples* under me'
Psa 144:5a	הַט־שָׁמֶיךָ וְתֵרֵד	'*spread* apart *your heavens*, so that *you may come down*'
Psa 18:10a	וַיֵּט שָׁמַיִם וַיֵּרַד	'then *he spread apart* the *heavens* and *he came down*'
Psa 144:5b	גַּע בֶּהָרִים וְיֶעֱשָׁנוּ	'*touch* the mountains, so that they may smoke'
Psa 104:32b	יִגַּע בֶּהָרִים וְיֶעֱשָׁנוּ	'*he touches* the mountains and they smoke'
Psa 144:6a	בְּרוֹק בָּרָק וּתְפִיצֵם	'*flash forth lightning* and *scatter* them'
Psa 18:15b	וּבְרָקִים רָב וַיְהֻמֵּם	'and *lightnings he multiplied* and *he confused* them'
Psa 144:6b	שְׁלַח חִצֶּיךָ וּתְהֻמֵּם	'*send your* arrows and *confuse* them'
Psa 18:15a	וַיִּשְׁלַח חִצָּיו וַיְפִיצֵם	'and *he sent his* arrows and *scattered* them'
Psa 144:7a	שְׁלַח יָדֶיךָ מִמָּרוֹם	'*stretch out your hand* from the height'
Psa 18:17a	יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם	'*he stretched out* from the height'

These few examples suffice to demonstrate the psalmist's method of reworking older material, without resorting to verbatim quotations.[414] While it would be interesting to attempt an interpretation of each of these differences, they show clearly that the author of Psa 144 modified his

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[412] For more parallels, also to various other psalms, cf. Brettler (1993:152f.) who summarizes: "However, Psalm 144 is not a hodgepodge of quotations. It is well-structured into a new unity, which praises YHWH the warrior (vv. 1-2); notes people's frailty, setting up an implicit need for divine help (vv. 3-4); requests aid from the warrior against foreigners who accuse the psalmist falsely (vv. 5-8); promises that if aided, he will sing to YHWH (v. 9); and then returns to the main them - a request for help, which largely restates vv. 7-8 (vv. 10-11)".

[413] The identification of similarities does not merely lie on a lexicographical level (otherwise parallels would be abundant), but on the level of expressions and colons.

[414] For more parallels, cf. Baumann (1950:148-152), Hunter (1989:103f.), and Tournay (1984:525-529).

literary originals according to a certain pattern.[415] The variations normally concern the colometric level, whereas the individual components are often rearranged, keywords are replaced, and grammatical changes have been made.

The fact that Psa 144 utilizes material from other, presumably older psalms, sheds some light on the question of dating, at least to the extent that this psalm clearly stands at the end of the line of development, since it represents a mixed form. Linguistically, there are also indicators which point to a post-exilic date for the psalm,[416] although the vss. 1-11 seem to rehearse the theme of the Israelite monarchy, while vss. 12-15 offer a number of descriptive beatitudes which are reminiscent of the blessings of Moses found in Deu 33. The apparent disconnectedness between these two parts has led to the proposal of two different texts merged into one unit with vss. 1-11 reflecting a royal psalm of the late pre-exilic period, while vss. 12-15 iterate the longing of the post-exilic Israelite community for prosperity and Yahweh's blessings (Allen, 1983:291f.).[417] We would suggest that the text of Psa 144 represents a unit which originated in the post-exilic community. The returning Jews used the theme of Yahweh training the king for battle as an idealized wish for the return of the monarchy, since the present form of government had not been accepted as a *fait accompli*. This was achieved through the presentation of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, reminiscent of the victories of the early monarchy and the invocation of the blessings associated with the conquest. The change from the indicatives in the *Vorlage(n)* of Psa 144 to its volitive moods would point to such an understanding.

The overall literary structure of Psa 144 cannot be demonstrated clearly along strophic lines,[418] but rather is correlated to the development of the psalm's content. The only structural repetitive element that could serve as a

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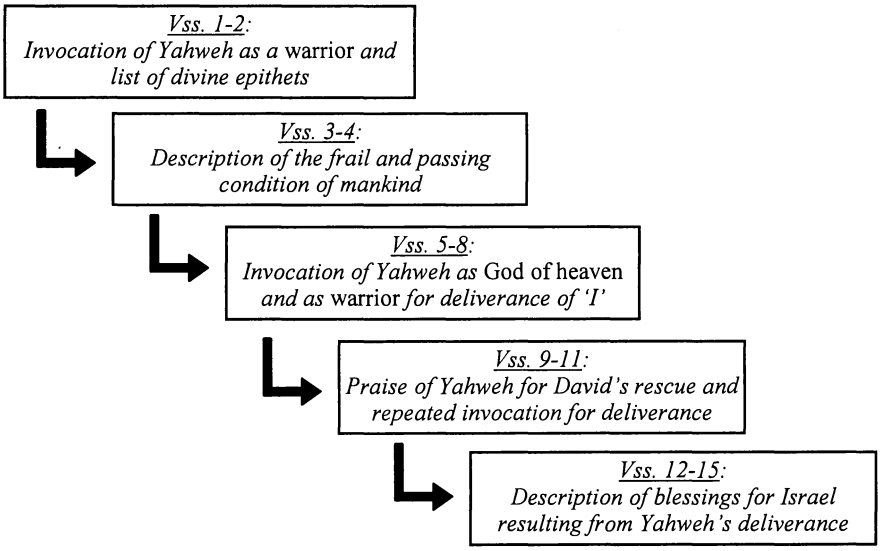
[415] E.g., the chiastic restructuring of Psa 18:15 in Psa 144:6, which appears to have been a literary poetic device also referred to as 'inverted quotation' (cf. Brettler, 1993:152f.).

[416] There are definite indicators for a late date contained in Psa 144: e.g., פצה with accusative as an Aramaism in vs. 7 and 11; זן 'kind, sort' as a Persian loan-word in vs. 13; and the use of שׁ as a relative pronoun in vs. 15. Furthermore, the position of the psalm in the last book of the Hebrew psalter reflects a chronological sequence to some extent and would point to a post-exilic date as well.

[417] Tournay connects the פרץ in vs. 14 with the breaches in the walls of Jerusalem before it was taken in 587 B.C. (1984:522; cf. Baumann, 1950:151).

[418] Against Baumann who tries to demonstrate the strophic structure by replacement of vss. 7-8 with 10b-11 (cf. also Loretz, 1988a:190).

unit marker is the יהוה address in vss. 1, 3, 5, and 9, thus dividing the psalm into five units.[419]



Graph 14: Literary structure of Psa 144

4.3.9.4. Comment on Psalm 144:5-8

Our passage constitutes the central unit of Psa 144 in which the God of heaven and warrior metaphors are developed in a rather concentrated fashion.[420]

Vs. 5: The invocation of Yahweh opens with a petition for his theophany in which he is requested to spread apart the protective cloud cover (הַט־שָׁמֶיךָ), in order to 'come down' (ירד), as the *terminus technicus* for the descent of the God of heaven during the theophanic event. The second colon of the vs. refers to Psa 104:32, and develops the God of heaven metaphor further in describing the natural phenomenon that accompany the descent of God

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[419] Hunter proposes a sixfold division and identifies vs. 15 as the final sixth stanza which refers back to vs. 2, i.e., the first stanza, with its use of עם forming a kind of *inclusio* (1987:110).

[420] Although vs. 1 does not belong to our passage, it nevertheless uses the warrior metaphor from an interesting perspective: 'blessed be Yahweh who trains my hands for battle, and my fingers for war' enhances our understanding of the warrior metaphor in the respect that "YHWH as the supreme warrior can teach people how to fight properly" (Brettler, 1993:153). The technical description of the training of hands and fingers for warfare is commented upon by Baumann: "Es kommt bei der Handhabung von Bogen und Pfeil im Kampfesgetümmel des ersten Angriffs und wieder der schnellen Verfolgung weniger darauf an, daß man überhaupt den Bogen spannt (mit den Armen 18 35), als wie die Finger Pfeil und Bogensehnen zielsicher handhaben" (1950:150).

(Exo 19:18; cf. also Psa 29:7). It is interesting to note the innovative combination of the descent and the mountain motifs which has taken place in Psa 144, both of which are features that we have discussed in this part of the study before.

Vs. 6: The vs. is a chiastic reworking of Psa 18:15 and serves as an invocation of Yahweh as warrior. However, since the imagery is that of lightning associated with the natural phenomenon of a thunderstorm (cf. our comment on Psa 18:15), it can be inferred that God as warrior does not use human weapons, but meteorological phenomena (cf. Weinfeld, 1986:121-147) as already seen in Psa 83. Although the language is anthropomorphic, military oriented, and apparently referring to the shooting of arrows, from the parallelism to the preceding colon we would understand the חִצֶּיךָ as descriptions of lightning which is scattered all over the sky.[421] The ambiguity remains, however, and may express the intentional hesitancy of the psalmist to ascribe human weaponry to Yahweh (cf. Brettler, 1993:155).

Vss. 7-8: The שלח at the beginning of the vs. connects vs. 7 to the preceding imagery with the difference that Yahweh is now requested to send his hands to the rescue of the psalmist, rather than to send his arrows for the destruction of the enemy. מָרוֹם again shifts the focus to the God of heaven metaphor, whereas the מַיִם רַבִּים are an emphatic poetical symbolic device with mythological antecedents for the expression of the encompassing danger, as Day has demonstrated (cf. note 411). The main complaint of the psalmist seems to be directed against בְּנֵי נֵכָר 'the foreigners' who speak deceptively and bring forth false accusations (vs. 8).

Thus, Psa 144 is a post-exilic request for the intervention of Yahweh on the behalf of the Jews who have returned from exile, illustrated via the reutilization of older traditions, i.e., the victories with theophanic intervention experienced during the early monarchy (vss. 5-8, resp. 1-11), and the reiteration of the covenantal blessings similar to the blessings of Moses (vss. 12-15). Although the God of heaven and warrior metaphors are recurring motifs, definite changes and adaptations have been made to fit a new context. What has been a descriptive praise now becomes a volitive request, trying to revitalize a lost historical reality.

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[421] The personal suffixes in vs. 6 are reflexive, and refer to the nominal forms in the same vs.

4.3.10. Summary

A short summary of the main points isolated in the exegesis of the eight psalms will be presented, followed by a statistical evaluation of the semantic notes with the intention to possibly identify overlapping features in the usage of language for the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.
(1) Psalm 18:8-16: The passage belongs to the group of psalms representing both the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in a mixed style. While the text-critical significance of the passage as a double text (= 2Sa 22:8-16) has been noted, the theophanic event of Yahweh's descent from heaven by means of a presentation of natural phenomena constitutes the main element of the pericope. The spatial dimensions expressed in the literary structure of vss. 8-16 exhibit a certain sequence from above to below. This spatial imagery forms an integral part of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors. In response to the psalmist's affliction the foundations of the earth are shaken as in an earthquake, and Yahweh's anger is depicted anthropomorphically using fire imagery, while the language is reminiscent of the Sinai revelation. Yahweh is spreading apart the clouds like a curtain, riding on the cherubim as on a war chariot. He remains, however, the *deus absconditus* with the cloud cover under his feet from which hail, thunder, and lightning emanate in the form of Yahweh's meteorological weapons against the king's enemies. The spatial cycle concludes with the effect Yahweh's theophany has on the foundations of the earth.
(2) Psalm 21:9-13: The warrior metaphor is the demarcating factor for the passage in Psa 21, which is evidently demonstrated by the choice of a warfare-oriented language. A clustering of imagery can be observed in vss. 9-13, centering around the various ways by which Yahweh is described to attack the enemies. After seizing the enemies in an almost physical manner, they are subjected to a form of capital punishment known throughout the ANE, i.e., the fiery furnace which again elaborates on the fire imagery. As a religious dimension of warfare, the offspring of the enemy is completely annihilated, a practice reminiscent of the Conquest and early Monarchic periods in Israel. Although the enemies have attempted to plot against Yahweh, they do not succeed, and are finally subdued through the turning of their shoulder, and the aiming of the bow against their faces. While the passage is almost exaggerate in its metaphorical language,[422] the protection

[422] The enemies do not only undergo one form of punishment, but are subjected to such a number of inflictions of which only one would be necessary to lead to their complete destruction.

of the king against his enemies is clearly communicated via the warrior metaphor.

(3) Psalm 29:3-9: Although we have classified Psa 29:3-9 originally as belonging to the class of psalms representing the God of heaven metaphor, the exegetical discussion has shown that the passage clearly reveals characteristics of the warrior imagery as well, thus demonstrating the close affinity between the two metaphors. The central motif of the passage is the 'voice of Yahweh', i.e., the sound of the approaching thunderstorm, which serves as the instrument of his appearance, but also of his involvement as a warrior. Again, spatial imagery is used in describing the progress of the thunderstorm from the Mediterranean, toward inland via Mt. Lebanon, Mt. Hermon, and finally into the desert Kadesh, thus favouring a northern toponomy for the movement of the storm. While the geographical allusions in the psalm are taken from actual Syro-Palestinian geography, an underlying figurative meaning cannot be excluded. As the thunderstorm forms over the Mediterranean, the 'mighty waters' indicate the presence of the chaos motif with a strong emphasis on Yahweh's supremacy. Moving inland, the effects of the storm are demonstrable on the fauna and flora of the countryside. Especially the mountains, otherwise a symbol of strength and stability in ANE mythology, are subjected to the divine thunderstorm. It appears advisable to reconsider the alleged Ugaritic parallels of the poem from the perspective of modern scholarship, proposing that the author of the psalm used commonly known Canaanite/Palestinian imagery, and reworked it according to his specific intentions.

(4) Psalm 46:7-12: The passage focuses predominantly on the warrior metaphor, but creates a surprising departure from the expected imagery. Concerning the language of vss. 7-12, a universal or cosmic character can be observed, although from a distinct Israelite perspective. Again, the theophanic element of Yahweh's voice is introduced with the accompanying effect on the whole inhabited earth, but at first directed against the non-Israelite nations and peoples. In the twice-appearing refrain, Yahweh is associated with the Israelite traditions of the patriarchal covenant and the ark of covenant, both reflecting the warrior imagery. The perspective is once more broadened to the whole earth, demonstrating Yahweh's astonishing and terrifying deeds on it, which are, contrary to expectation, of a rather irenic nature, nevertheless, with warlike overtones. Although the destructional element is present, it is not directed against an enemy, but against the implements of warfare which Yahweh destroys with utmost efficiency. The demonstration of Yahweh's efficiency in putting a permanent end to warfare, is followed by an acknowledgement of his supremacy on a universal scale. A number of sequential units can be

observed throughout the whole psalm, e.g., from chaos to order, from war to peace, or from regional to universal consequences.

(5) Psalm 65:10-14: Although Psa 65 has been neglected to some extent in the scholarly debate, the recent discussion has shown that the God of heaven metaphor lies at the center of the imagery employed in this psalm. The language of vss. 10-14 is saturated by agrarian terminology, while some unexpected combinations of terms from normally far-removed semantic domains occur. Part of the imagery is influenced by the geographical peculiarities of Palestine which function as a colourful backdrop for the content of the passage. Yahweh visiting the land is the origin of all goodness bestowed upon the region: there is an abundance of rain, which is the main factor in the annual circle of growth and fertility. Grain is provided by ways of preparing the fields with rain showers, furthering the sprouting of the young shoots, and wherever Yahweh's goodness passes, tracks of blessing and fertility remain. The psalmist describes the effects of God's agricultural blessings on the various climatic regions of Palestine, which are all exuberant with new life. The notion of Yahweh being the giver of fertility and growth is the description of a common Levantine experience against the background of an agrarian society from an Israelite perspective.

(6) Psalm 68:15-22: While Psa 68 remains one of the more problematic psalms, the imagery of the selected passage reflects both the God of heaven and warrior metaphors. Central to the imagery of vss. 15-22 is the 'mountain' motif which appears repeatedly, creating an antithetical pair between the mountains of the gods and Yahweh's mountain which, in the final analysis, is equivalent to his sanctuary on Mt. Zion. The geographical locale for the passage is at first the Transjordan region which creates an allusion to the battles of the Conquest period east of the Jordan river. As the mountains of the gods watch Yahweh's choice of his mountain with envy, he proceeds toward it in an entourage of the heavenly host and war chariots resembling an ANE victory procession. In tune with such an imagery, Yahweh takes prisoners of war and receives gifts from humankind, and is praised continuously for his deliverance which even controls death. Returning once more to the warrior metaphor, the passage concludes with an image of Yahweh's ultimate dominion and the subjugation of the enemy via the motif of the smiting god who is shattering the enemy's head. Psa 68:15-22 evokes a number of early Israelite traditions, integrating them into a description of his taking up residence in his one and only sanctuary in contrast to the varied and minor dwellings of other gods.

(7) Psalm 83:14-18: This psalm returns to the description of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors via natural, viz., meteorological phenomena.

The choice of language exhibits affinities to the description of the divine thunderstorm of Psa 29 with a number of distinct parallels. Yahweh is invoked to attack the enemy in the form of a whirlwind which scatters them like chaff before the wind, followed by the request to destroy the enemy through fire. Again, the fire imagery is used and its destructive effect on the vegetation and countryside is likened to the effect of Yahweh's divine storm. In an intensification of the imagery, the storm becomes Yahweh's actual weapon in his fight against the psalmist's enemy, while the author is requesting a theophany of the God of heaven as a warrior on behalf of his people. As a sign of utter defeat the enemy is to be humiliated after the victory, although the ultimate purpose behind this process is the acknowledgement of Yahweh.

(8) Psalm 144:5-8: As a passage which incorporates material from other psalms (predominantly from Psa 18 and Psa 104), vss. 5-8 focus on both the God of heaven and warrior metaphors. Although the parallels between Psa 144 and Psa 18, viz., Psa 104 appear to be at times verbatim, there are distinct changes, such as change of verbal conjugations, verbal moods, or the replacement of certain key words. Placing these parallels alongside each other, it becomes apparent that the author of Psa 144:5-8 reworked and regrouped the material he used in accordance with his literary and rhetorical intentions which are possibly motivated by the historical background of the post-exilic Jewish community. Yahweh's descent from heaven is evoked similar to the theophany in Psa 18, combining the imagery, however, with the mountain motif. He is furthermore requested to use his meteorological weapons, especially the lightning which resembles the form of an arrow. Shifting the focus to the above, Yahweh is evoked to save the psalmist from the 'mighty waters' which are reminiscent of the chaos imagery in parallel stance to the foreigners which present themselves as a chaotic force.

With regard to the verbal forms appearing in the selected passages of the eight psalms under discussion, the following observations can be made, while only the lemmas occurring in more than one psalm are considered.

It becomes apparent that the distribution of verbal lemmas is too loosely scattered in order to allow any conclusions. Most of the twofold occurrences are caused by the literary relationship between Psa 18 and 144, and only the verb used in the description of the theophany, i.e., נטה 'to stretch, spread out, bow', occurs in more than two psalms, being relevant to the present study.[423]

[423] שית also occurs in more than two psalms, but its usage is too common to be of any significance.

	Psa 18	Psa 21	Psa 29	Psa 46	Psa 65	Psa 68	Psa 83	Psa 144	Total
עלה	X					X			2
אכל	X	X							2
בער	X						X		2
נשה	X	X						X	3
ירד	X							X	2
שׁית	X	2X					X		4
רעם	X		X						2
נתן	X			X					2
שׁלח	X							2X	3
פוץ	X							X	2
המם	X							X	2
אבד		X					X		2
כון		X			X				2
שׁבר			2X	X					3
מוג				X	X				2
הלךְ				X		X			2
ברךְ					X	X			2

Table 21: Frequency of verbal lemmas

With regard to the nominal forms, the following picture emerges:

Word	Psa 18	Psa 21	Psa 29	Psa 46	Psa 65	Psa 68	Psa 83	Psa 144	Total
אֶרֶץ	X	X		4X	X				7
הַר	X					6X	X	X	9
אַף	2X	X							3
אֵשׁ	3X	2X	X	X			X		8
שָׁמַיִם	2X							X	3
רוּחַ	X						X		2
מַיִם	X		2X		X			X	5
יְהוָה	2X	X	10X	3X		2X	X	X	20
קוֹל	X	7X	X						9
חֵץ	X							X	2
בָּרָק	X							X	2
יָד		X						2X	3
איב		X				X			2
פָּנֶה		2X					X		3

Word	Psa 18	Psa 21	Psa 29	Psa 46	Psa 65	Psa 68	Psa 83	Psa 144	Total
בֵּן		X	X					X	3
אָדָם		X				X			2
קָדֵשׁ			X			X			2
אֵל			X			3X			4
מִדְבָּר			2X		X				3
אֱלֹהִים				3X	X	5X	X		10
מָרוֹם						X		X	2

Table 22: Frequency of nominal lemmas

Besides the divine names, the following nouns show a high frequency throughout the passages discussed in this study, and thus constitute integral elements in the choice of language for the God of heaven and warrior metaphors: אֶרֶץ 'earth, land', הַר 'mountain', אֵשׁ 'fire', מַיִם 'waters, sea', and קוֹל 'voice'.

5. GOD AS WARRIOR AND AS GOD OF HEAVEN IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY

Before the extra-biblical evidence with regard to the God of heaven and divine warrior motifs will be examined, some general remarks about the relationship between iconography and biblical metaphors should be made, which will include an introduction to the contribution of iconography to the realm of biblical studies, followed by a short introductory discussion of the source material gathered.

5.1. INTRODUCTION: ICONOGRAPHY AND BIBLICAL METAPHORS

Although the reception of iconographic material and the literary device of a metaphorical expression lie on two different levels, i.e., the visual and the cognitive, they nevertheless are closely interrelated with each other, since a metaphor is able to create a cognitive imagery which might correspond to or be influenced by associations to iconographic depictions. The biblical word and literary imagery have repeatedly been related to iconographic sources of the ANE,[1] but the resulting works have often not been able to go beyond the level of providing mere illustrations for the biblical texts.[2] While it is certainly correct to identify the early attempts of biblical iconographic research as such, there has nevertheless been a steady development in methodology that has enhanced the relevance of that branch of biblical studies.

The results and advantages of an iconographic approach to the biblical text have been demonstrated through a number of publications associated with

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[1] Keel traces the historical development of iconography and its contribution to the study of the biblical text (1992a:361-369), and its role in present biblical scholarship (1992a:369-372).

[2] Beach in an unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled *Image & Word: Iconology in the interpretation of Hebrew scriptures* has examined the various resources the biblical scholar can utilize, and categorizes them as follows (1991:39-48): (1) picture collections which serve primarily as illustrators to the biblical text - here she also includes Keel's *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament*; (2) encyclopedias which are often influenced by "certain Jewish and Christian theological traditions" (1991:43) and are usually biased toward the biblical text; (3) sample archaeological treatments which are the remaining resource and often are the only means, though sometimes not easily accessed, to get an overall picture.

the Biblical Institute at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.[3] The fact that Keel's widely cited *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament* (1972)[4] focused on the Hebrew psalter shows the suitability of that corpus of texts for iconographic comparison.[5] More recent publications have moved from mere biblical theme oriented studies[6] toward a primary concern of the iconographic evidence as such with its consequential bearing on the religious history of ancient Israel.[7] In the same way, the focus has shifted from exegetical issues to the synthesizing and integration of iconographic evidence into an overall picture of the religious belief of ancient Israel: "Was aber die Rekonstruktion der religiösen Vorstellungswelt (*belief*) [their italics] betrifft, um die sich die hier angebotene Studie in erster Linie bemüht, so weisen wir die einseitige

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3 Comments Roberts with regard to the contribution of iconography to biblical studies: "Even more impressive, however, has been Othmar Keel's series of exciting exegetical studies ... which have systematically incorporated the pictorial evidence, including that of the seals, into the exegetical process. This is perhaps the most promising direction taken in recent biblical scholarship's use of the comparative material. One can only hope that scholars will begin to give serious attention to non-epigraphic evidence in a more self-critical fashion" (1985:95; cf. also Quaegebeur, 1989:72f.).

4 As in Keel's work we will use line-drawings for the present study which will facilitate the recognition of the various motifs, although the danger of an erroneous copied detail cannot be excluded. Comments Keel: "Sie [line-drawings] machen Arbeiten dieser Art trotz der hohen Zahl von Abbildungen noch erschwinglich, und zahlreiche Details sind auf den Zeichnungen besonders für ein ungeübtes Auge rascher und sicherer zu erkennen als auf photographischen Wiedergaben mittlerer Qualität" (1977a:14, n. 9; cf. also the criticism of Loretz, 1974:512).

5 The purpose of the study was stated as follows: "Sie [the study] hat sich vielmehr die Aufgabe gestellt, in einer Art Übersichtsbericht (survey) ein möglichst breites Bildmaterial leicht zugänglich zu machen und (im fortlaufenden Text) auf Ähnlichkeiten zwischen der Problemlage und Vorstellungswelt dieser Bilder und jener der Pss hinzuweisen. Dabei ist in den wenigsten Fällen an die an sich mögliche (historisch faßbare) Abhängigkeit eines Ps-Verses von der ao Bildkunst gedacht, sondern es handelt sich um das Aufzeigen gleicher, ähnlicher oder auch diametral entgegengesetzter Auffassungen des gleichen Phänomens ... im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt" (1972:11).

6 E.g., Keel (1972; 1977a; 1977b; and 1984).

7 Cf. the *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel I-IV* by Keel *et al.* (Keel and Schroer, 1985; Keel, Keel-Leu, and Schroer, 1989; Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990; and Keel, 1994). As a more recent example we may take the co-authored work of Keel and Uehlinger, *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole* (1992) which incorporates iconographic sources from Syro-Palestine, and tries to integrate them into the religious history (histories?) of Canaan and Israel (cf. the thorough review of the work by Weippert, 1994:1-28). Furthermore, there is an extensive religious history of Israel in preparation, based primarily on the iconographic evidence, authored by Keel and Schroer. Cf. also Keel's exhaustive catalogue of Palestinian stamp seals of which the first two volumes have been published (Keel, 1995; Keel, 1997).

Beschränkung auf Texte entschieden zurück" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:10).[8] Thus it is attempted to contribute to the reconstruction of the religious conceptual world (*Vorstellungswelt*) of Israel through pictorial material.[9]

The present study tries to adopt an intermediate position in returning to the exegetical issue, i.e., the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in the book of psalms, but at the same time providing an iconographic comparison which does not focus on illustration and parallels, but on concepts and motifs, i.e., that of the warrior and God of heaven imagery in the depiction of ANE deities. This is attempted through a division between the exegetical and the comparative parts of the study. Only in the following chapter of the discussion will a synthesis between the concept of the warrior and God of heaven as seen from a biblical perspective and from the iconographic perspective be undertaken.

Having said that, one immediately has to qualify this statement to the effect that the relationships between biblical imagery and the iconographic material of the ANE are manifold and can be of a rather complex nature (cf. our discussion of the comparative method below in chapter 6).[10]

These considerations lead to the question of the interpretation of the iconographic evidence and the involved methodology. Although the earlier

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[8] The methodological procedure to accomplish this objective follows: "Angesichts dieser Situation [the emphasis on texts for the interpretation of the religious history of Syro-Palestine] haben wir hier zum ersten Mal ... konsequent einen anderen Weg zu beschreiten versucht. Wir haben mit Hilfe einer systematischen Auswertung des archäologischen Materials unter strenger Beachtung des geographischen Raums und der Zeiträume das Symbolsystem einer Folge von archäologisch unterscheidbaren Perioden zu rekonstruieren versucht" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:457).

[9] It seems to be important to note that iconography cannot be used to reconstruct history, since the nature of ancient art lies in the realm of abstraction and concepts, and not in the depiction of historical events: "ANE iconography is suitable for the illustration of the typical or the institutional, but not for that of the individual person or the historical event" (Keel, 1992a:361). However, it would also be injudicious to deny any relationship between depiction and reality, but not on the level of historiography as a chronology of events, but rather in the realm of religious history or history of ideas. However, in this area, "the visual image is better adapted for the portrayal of complicated relationships" (Keel, 1992a:358) than words.

[10] Keel (1992a:358) summarizes these relationships: "(1) A biblical text can explicitly describe a work of art, as e.g., the descriptions of Chaldean warriors in Ezek 23:14. (2) Descriptions can also be implicit. There are sound reasons for believing that Ezekiel was influenced by pictorial representations when describing the 4 living creatures supporting the sky (Ezekiel 1 ...). (3) A text and a picture can independently deal with the same subject matter, as e.g., the appointment of an official or his being rewarded (Gen 31:37-45 and several Egyptian tomb paintings of New Kingdom date ...)."

attempts of the Fribourg-School[11] were less concerned with the methodological procedures applicable in the interpretation of the iconographic sources, usually gearing their methodological considerations toward the demonstration of the benefits iconographic studies have on biblical studies,[12] more recent publications touch on methodological issues in a more systematic way (Keel, 1992b; Keel and Uehlinger, 1992). In his introduction to *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden*, Keel describes the study as an enterprise in methodology, not from a merely theoretical perspective, but with the aid of three exemplary discussions in which he tries to show the following: (1) Each picture has to be evaluated in its own right without the reception bias of Judeo-Christian exegesis, before it can be linked exegetically to a text. (2) Image and Word are not dichotic, but should rather be complementary to each other, mutually enhancing. (3) Pictures can be interpreted with the help of other pictorial material without necessarily resorting to textual sources (1992b:xi-xiii).

While these guidelines are also relevant for this part of the present study, they are rather broad and a more detailed scheme of iconographic interpretation seems to be necessary.[13] Such a method scheme can be adapted for the needs of the present study from Keel's scheme no. 2 (1992b:273).[14]

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[11] Although it may sound somewhat over-significant to speak of a Fribourg-School, it appears that the recent trends in iconography have been clearly influenced by the Swiss scholar and his academic colleagues, while the prolific publishing activities of the OT department at the Biblical Institute at Fribourg have contributed toward this end.

[12] Although it appears that the iconographic approach is a predominantly Swiss domain, the dissertation by Beach confirms the increasing attention iconographic studies are receiving in North America. While she positions herself in the tradition of the Fribourg-School she nevertheless takes a critical stand: "While Keel, Winter, and Schroer are prolific in their efforts to relate ancient Near Eastern iconography to biblical conceptions, they are not helpful in explicit methodological self-awareness and explanation. In each case [she examines Keel (1972; 1978), Winter (1983), and Schroer (1987)], one's willingness to accept the textual consequences of their presentation may be moderated by reservations about the contextual handling of the visual evidence (Keel's smaller projects are less open to this weakness)" (1991:73).

[13] Beach summarizes the methodological guidelines for an examination of figurines from Samaria in the following way: (1) location, i.e., the archaeological context of the artifact and its significance for the understanding of the object; (2) execution; (3) clustering, i.e., the constellation of the various motifs to each other; (4) potency, i.e., potential relationship to Israelite cult, or other potential cult significance; and (5) relation to texts (1991:92).

[14] For lack of English equivalents we have anglicized a number of terms whereas we tried to provide a useful explanation of such terms.

Interpretation object	Main question	Methodological procedure	Control and evaluation
Motif (image element, iconem)	Which phenomenon represents a motif? Relationship between significant[15] and referent[16]	Motif-criticism, -history (biological-transcultural, or cultural dependent features) Depiction convention (artistic, linear, realistic, schematic-synthetic)	Technical quality (state of preservation of image, skill of artist, type of technique)
Scene (image type, theme, icon)	How are individual motifs combined into meaningful or expressive units? Relationship between significate[17] and significant (referent)	Theme-criticism, -history (cultural or transcultural verifiable motifs which are combined stereotypically on account of biological or sociological conditions), synchronic and diachronic parallels and variants of such combinations Composition (size, scale, forms and colours, associative, aspective or perspective image depiction) Co-text (typical combination of certain scenes)	Image quality (original or copy, compositional unity, later additions, multiple artists)
Decoration (icon text)	At which places (motifs, scenes) and for which purpose are decorations attached? Significate with reference to producer and recipient Function and meaning of an image within the context of mentality history	Decoration-criticism, -history (e.g., typical decorations of certain image carrier like church windows, tombstones, or seals) Structure of overall decoration Sitz im Leben of image, viz., image carrier (context)	Decoration quality (feasibility of a certain decoration for a specific location)

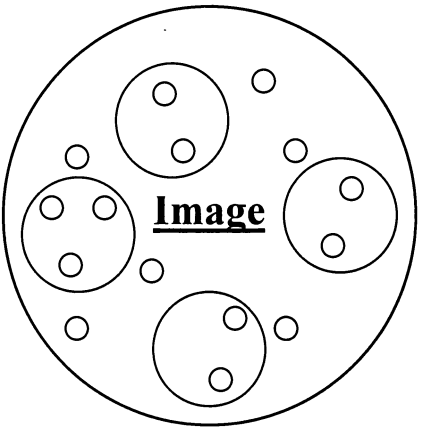
Table 23: Keel's iconographic interpretation scheme

[15] The significant refers to image details.

[16] The significant stands in a certain relationship to another significant which functions as the referent for this significant, together forming the individual motif.

[17] In an ascending hierarchical order, the significate would refer to the scene which is made up of various significants, viz., referents.

Although this scheme appears to present a certain sequential approach to the interpretation of the image, it is important to note that these steps do not have to follow consecutively, but are only tabulated like this for presentation purposes. Keel comments: "Das durch dieses Schema suggerierte 1, 2, 3 des Vorgehens ist für uns rein konventionell. Jeder einzelne Aspekt der Wahrnehmung und Reflexion steht in vielfältiger Beziehung mit jedem andern und die Reihenfolge spielt keine Rolle" (1992b:271). However, it is necessary to acknowledge the hierarchical architecture of image composition which is comparable to the hermeneutical circle of exegesis on a linguistic level.[18] For this purpose, a certain segmentization has to take place, in order to understand the substructures of the image.[19]



Graph 11: Hermeneutic circle of image interpretation

Graph 11 shows the interpretation scheme in a more graphic way. The circular depiction demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between the individual components of the image. While it is important to understand the smallest units, the overall meaning of the image can only be derived from an integration of all the elements.[20] Since the purpose of this study is a

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[18] I.e., the sequence letter, word, phrase, sentence, unit, section, chapter, book. All the components need to be understood individually, but only their reciprocal relationship creates the overall picture.

[19] The danger of this process is described by Keel: "Fragmentation, as initiated by Wilkinson and Layard and followed by many biblical scholars, is still typically the way in which Egyptian and Assyrian pictures are presented in illustrating biblical civilization. Very seldom is an entire relief or a complete wall painting reproduced. ... Under such fragmentization the sociological aspect of the pictures is not revealed" (1992a:367-369).

[20] In an unpublished M.A. thesis completed at the University of Stellenbosch entitled *Syro-Palestinian stamp seals from the Persian period (538-332 B.C.). An analysis of their iconographic motifs and inscriptions* (1992a), the author has concentrated on a description process for stamp seals which takes this hermeneutical circle of picture interpretation into consideration. Similar to the semantic description for NT Greek by Louw and Nida (1989), a system was developed which divides the image into elements which are classified according to general domains and subdomains (e.g., element domain: figure; subdomain 1: male; subdomain 2: warrior; subdomain 3: god (Reshef); subdomain 4: mixed view). The elements in turn are described according to their modifications (e.g., modification domain: dress; subdomain 1: short skirt; subdomain 2: striped; subdomain 3: belt). With this descriptive process a systematized approach to the

presentation of a certain concept, i.e., God of heaven and warrior metaphors, from the perspective of ANE iconography, the emphasis here lies not so much on the pre-iconographic description, but on the iconographic analysis, and on the iconological analysis, i.e., the interpretation of the image.[21] This terminology is derived from Panofsky's methodological scheme which has dominated the iconographic interpretation process during the present century. According to him, the iconographic/iconological work consists of three steps: (1) pre-iconographic description: based on the practical experience of the describer; aimed at the primary object; (2) iconographic analysis: based on the knowledge of literary sources for comparative purposes, focuses on type-history; the secondary or conventional subject is the objective; and (3) iconological analysis/interpretation: based on synthetic intuition and a knowledge of cultural symptoms and symbols; aimed at the establishing of meaning (cf. Klingbeil, 1992a:30).[22] Keel has especially criticized Panofsky's second methodological step, since it reverts to an interpretation of images on the basis of textual sources: "Richtig aber ist, dass das Methodenschema Panofskys der Komposition, der Syntax nicht das nötige Gewicht gibt und im Anschluss an die Identifizierung der einzelnen 'Vokabeln' gleich nach dem zugrundeliegenden (literarischen) Text sucht" (1992b:269). This criticism becomes especially transparent, if one identifies Keel's interest in ANE iconography: "Uns interessiert altorientalische Kunst als Teil der altorientalischen Kulturen und besonders ihrer Religionen" (1992b:271). While we would agree that the importance of interpreting an image in its own right and independently from a textual source cannot be overemphasized, we nevertheless would suggest that the comparison of word and picture remains a *sine qua non* in ANE iconography, since it constitutes a complementary controlling factor in the interpretation of the picture and the text, and it may serve as a safeguard against a *l'art pour l'art* approach to iconography.[23] Thus it appears to be

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pre-iconographic description and iconographic analysis was accomplished, especially with the view to a possible development of an iconographic computer assisted database.

[21] Since we are dealing with a concept which iconographically is expressed through constellations and scenes, the pre-iconographic description has to be regarded as a prerequisite for the present study.

[22] This is a rather condensed version of the methodological scheme (cf. Panofsky, 1979:207-225). For a more intensive critique, cf. Keel (1992b:267-271).

[23] In principle, there is nothing wrong with such an approach if one is exclusively concerned with art history (but even there the texts seem to be indispensable), but if the topic is iconography from a biblical perspective, then it seems impossible to remove the image too far from the biblical text. This is, of course, spoken with a certain bias toward the biblical text, yet with the intent to reconcile the two apparent opposites. A different

crucial, not if, but at which point in the interpretative process the comparison between word and image takes place. The image has to be understood in its own right before it can be set in relation to any text. This relationship furthermore should be governed by the principles of a sound comparative method which includes the notion of parallels and/or contrasts.

5.2. THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE WARRIOR AND GOD OF HEAVEN IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

In the following section, the various images of gods that reflect the concept of the warrior and God of heaven will be presented. It is important to note that our study is not an attempt to describe the warrior god or God of heaven of the ANE in an exhaustive way, since space and scope do not allow for such a treatment of the iconographic sources. However, we endeavour to provide a representative cross-section of iconographic objects which will demonstrate the attention these themes received during the periods of the ANE.

5.2.1. The Source Material

The selection of the iconographic objects relevant to this study was actuated by an associative approach initiated through the preliminary survey of metaphors in general, and the biblical metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter. Since the God of heaven and warrior metaphors proved to be an interesting and promising imagery with a wide distribution in the book of psalms, iconographic sources which could contribute in any way to the understanding of these metaphors were taken into consideration. The selection was not undertaken within a closed system of referents which would only allow images to be chosen that would correspond closely to or illustrate the biblical text, but rather in a more unconfined associative manner which would be able to provide a representative demonstration of the imagery in ANE iconography. Thus the form of presentation will not draw comparisons at every possible intersection, but first try to introduce the iconographic evidence in its own right in the form of a descriptive catalogue, giving the reader an opportunity to form a 'picture' of these motifs in his/her own mind.[24]

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approach to iconography can be seen in Christian art where the image is clearly intended to illustrate the biblical text (cf. Keel, 1992a:361-369).

[24] Part of the research for this section was undertaken during a visit at the Biblical Institute at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland during February and March 1994. To make

It is interesting to note that the majority of images that have any bearing on our discussion, are found on seals and more specifically, on Neo-Assyrian cylinder-seals. This accounts for the fact that the majority of the images presented here are in the form of this iconographic object, confirming Keel's notion that miniature art has been the most important mass communicator in Palestine/Israel,[25] although the cylinder-seal is far less common in that region than the stamp-seal.[26] However, the character of the cylinder-seal allows for a depiction of complex scenes within a limited space, while the stamp-seal is usually confined to depicting one motif or fragmented scenes.

The two governing principles of the comparative method are the criteria of chronology and geography. For the present study we have adopted the following guidelines in the application of these criteria.

Chronology: Since we have demonstrated in the exegetical part of the study that the psalms under discussion incorporate material covering a chronological time-frame ranging from the beginning of the Israelite monarchy to the return of the exiles from Babylon, i.e., post-exilic times, we have set the chronological limits for the inclusion of iconographic

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this somewhat costly enterprise possible, financial support was given by the Department of ANE Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and by the Biblical Institute at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (from hereafter BIF), for which we would like to express our appreciation. During the stay, the following sources were examined: the stamp-seal collection of the BIF (ca. 8500 pieces); the cylinder-seal collection of the BIF (ca. 500 pieces), the comprehensive collection of ANE cylinder-seal catalogues, various excavation reports, exhibition and auction catalogues, ANE art catalogues, as well as a host of other publications pertaining to ANE iconography.

[25] "Entschieden häufiger als all bisher genannten Bildträger hat man in Palästina/Israel aber **Siegel** und Amulette gefunden. Sie stellten im Bereich der Ikonographie vor der Einführung geprägter Münzen wahrscheinlich das wichtigste Massenkommunikationsmittel dar. Besonders die Siegel sind zudem bedeutend motivreicher als alle andern in diesem Land verfügbaren Bildträger der Bronze- und Eisenzeit" (Keel and Schroer, 1985:20). More recently Keel and Uehlinger went even further in stressing the importance of stamp seals for ANE iconography: "Siegelamulette stellen nicht nur quantitativ alle anderen Bildträgergattungen und erst recht die inschriftlichen Funde weit in den Schatten. Sie können, da sie in allen Perioden relativ gleichmäßig belegt sind, geradezu als eine Art Leitfossil für die Religionsgeschichte dienen, zumal sie aufgrund ihres halböffentlichen Status besonders sensible Seismographen für religionsgeschichtliche Verschiebungen sind..." (1992:11).

[26] Cf. the series *Studien zu den Stempelsiegeln aus Palästina/Israel* (for bibliographical references cf. note 7) in which the development of the stamp-seal in Palestine/Israel is traced throughout the various archaeological periods. It is somewhat regrettable that the series does not go beyond the end of the Iron Age, neglecting the important yet still obscure Persian period to some extent.

material in this study accordingly, allowing for a certain marginal factor.[27] Expressed in archaeological terms, our chronological limits encompass the Iron Age IA (1250-1100 B.C.), the Iron Age IB (1100-1000 B.C.), Iron Age IIA (1000-900 B.C.), Iron Age IIB (925-720/700 B.C.), Iron Age IIC (720/700-600 B.C.), Iron Age III (600/587-450 B.C.) and Persian period (450-333 B.C.).[28]

Geography: The geographical limitations of the present study have to be correlated to the chronological demarcations. The period under discussion comprises such a number of historical situations[29] and locations that it appears advisable to advance the geographical limitations beyond the immediate Palestinian/Israelite borders. Thus we have chosen images from the ANE in general, while objects from Syro-Palestine receive special attention. This presupposes a certain exchange in the conceptual world of the ancient Near Eastern people which is demonstrable in the wide distribution of the motifs under discussion. One has to mention the fact that quite a number of the iconographic objects selected for this study, have none or an uncertain archaeological context, since they are stemming from museums or have been acquired from antiquity dealers. However, the coherence of the motif-history of ANE iconography allows a certain degree of surety in the dating and integration of the respective object. Where possible, the archaeological stratigraphy has been taken into consideration.[30]

We have applied a similar general classification as in the exegetical part of the study, differentiating between images of deities displaying warrior attributes, followed by depictions of the God of heaven imagery, and finally

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27 As observed in our study of Persian stamp seals, motifs of a certain period were often active far into the next period, e.g., the use of Neo-Babylonian motifs up to the end of the 5th century B.C. in Syro-Palestine (cf. Klingbeil, 1992a:57).

28 We follow Keel and Uehlinger in the chronology of archaeological periods which departs from conventional chronologies with regard to the internal chronology of the Iron Age IIB/C which is based on the finds of miniature art rather than on architectural developments. Their Iron Age III (600/587-450 B.C.), however, seems to us too inclusive, since the motif history of the Persian period definitely also sets new directions in the iconography of Palestine/Israel (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:16-19; cf. Weippert, 1994:3; cf. Klingbeil, 1992a:52-74).

29 E.g., Psa 68 which presupposes a Transjordan locale, possibly, even reaching into Syria. Cf. also the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. While we would not suggests that the texts under considerations originated in these places, the imagery employed in them could nevertheless be attributed to influences from these regions.

30 Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Die Frage nach dem 'Sitz im Leben' muß nicht nur an die biblischen Texte, sondern ebenso sehr an die bei archäologischen Ausgrabungen gefundenen Inschriften und an die ikonographischen Quellen gestellt werden" (1992:471).

iconographic objects which show deities exhibiting attributes of both classes. The order of presentation within these three general classes is according to motif groups found on the iconographic objects. An arrangement in motif groups seems to be advisable, since it organizes the material in a way that allows the reader to form a structured picture in her/his mind as to how the God of heaven and warrior metaphors were manifest in ANE iconography. Within the motif groups the objects are ordered chronologically.

5.2.2. Gods with Warrior Attributes

The depiction of gods with warrior attributes is attested throughout the various archaeological time periods of the ANE. It is important to note that an individual god could be portrayed in various poses with differing attributes, while it is as much possible that two different gods were presented in similar fashions with closely resembling attributes.[31] Thus the identification of the deity is sometimes ambiguous, especially in view of syncretic tendencies toward the end of the ANE (cf. Klingbeil, 1992b:117f.).[32]

5.2.2.1. The Smiting God

The smiting god is one of the most common representations of ANE deities which exhibit warrior attributes. We have limited our selection of objects to ten specimens which indicate the variety and chronological divergence this motif has undergone in ANE iconography.
Our first example of the smiting god (**Figure 1**) shows a cast bronze figure from the Pomerance Collection, published by Collon (1972:111-134, fig.

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[31] The iconography of Ba'al and Reshef has often been confused, since they are depicted in similar stances with only slightly differing attributes. I. Cornelius, from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, has examined *The iconography of the Canaanite gods Reshef and Ba'al in the Late Bronze and Iron Age I periods (c 1500-1000 BC)* (1994) With regard to the affinities in the depiction of the two Canaanite deities, Cornelius maintains: "Only by comparative study of the independent iconography of Reshef on the one hand and that of Ba'al on the other, can the confusion in identifying and differentiating between them be cleared. It will be shown that certain attributes, weapons and animal pedestals are unique. These enable us to distinguish between images representing Ba'al, and those representing Reshef" (1994:14). However, after considering the evidence, this notion appears to be somewhat to optimistic.

[32] While the region of Palestine/Israel experienced a renewal of orthodoxy in post-exilic times (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:468f.), the ANE as a whole was rather characterized by syncretistic developments, as e.g., the mixed iconographic style of the Phoenician coastal belt during the Persian period shows (Klingbeil, 1992b:110f.; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:434-438).

A).[33] The figure is altogether 15.1 cm high, and shows a male in a striding position with his left foot forward standing on a crouching lion. His right hand is raised above his head, holding an object in an horizontal position, although only the shaft of the object has remained. The left hand is extended to the front at the height of his midsection, holding a spear in a vertical position of which the bottom part has been broken off. The ears of the figure are emphasized, and he is wearing a high headdress, reminiscent of the White Crown of Upper Egypt. Since the surface of the bronze figure is corroded to some extent, the dress is not distinguishable. The lion's mouth is in an open position, and there is a tenon protruding from the bottom-side of the animal presumably on which the whole figure was mounted.

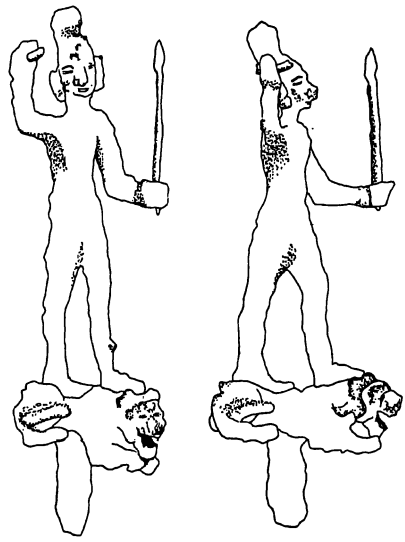

Figure 1

The way of depiction is typical for this class of figures found throughout the Levant during the Late Bronze and Iron Age I.[34] Thus Collon dates this piece to the 14th century B.C. which would push it to the far end of the chronological margin relevant for the comparative purposes of our study. A definite Egyptian influence is discernible, as the unifying feature of the Egyptian White Crown demonstrates, and the inquiry into the origins for this iconographic motif must be pursued from an Egyptian perspective. With regard to an identification of the figure, Collon correctly observes that, owing to Indo-European influences, the smiting god was connected to the weather- or storm-god in Syria and Anatolia, and that he was identified with various gods throughout the 2nd and 1st millennia.[35] The two main possible identifications would be the weather-god Hadad-Ba'al or Reshef

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[33] Since the figure was acquired privately from a New York dealer, the archaeological context is unfortunately not traceable.

[34] Collon presents comparative material from the Levant, Anatolia, Cyprus, Egypt, Spain, and the Greek islands which display a variety in style and techniques, whereas "the only unifying factor is the position they all adopt" (1972:126). Collon discusses the stylistic differences found in the various provenances. The objects that have been dated, range from 1550-1150 B.C., i.e., the Late Bronze I to the Iron Age IA.

[35] "The Smiting- or Weather-god maintained his popularity in Syria and seems to have acquired warrior attributes when necessary" (Collon, 1972:131).

(Collon, 1972:131; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:67f.), although the final decision is difficult to make, since the weapons held by the figure (which can serve as a distinguishing marker) are partly destroyed. Reshef is normally depicted with a hand-weapon and shield, while Ba'al is often depicted wearing two weapons.[36] This would promote the identification of our figure with Ba'al, since the left hand is holding a spear, while the left hand is raised above the head in a smiting posture, holding presumably another weapon, possibly an ax or mace, omitting the possibility that he has been carrying a shield with this hand.[37] It is interesting to note that a typical depiction of the warrior motif is associated with the weather-god.

Figure 2 shows another example of the smiting figure motif, communicated through a different iconographic medium, i.e., the scarab. The steatite scarab was found at Beth Pelet (Tell el-Far'ah), grave 935, and stems from the 19th-20th Dynasty which corresponds to a dating between 1295-1075 B.C.[38] The Egyptian influence is clearly manifested in the iconographic objects stemming from Beth Pelet (Tell el-Far'ah) (cf. Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:342). The base measures 16 mm in height and 12 mm in breadth. Depicted on it is a male figure in a striding position standing on a double line, wearing a short kilt with tassels, and a Blue Crown with an uraeus in the front as a headdress. His right hand is raised above his head, holding a curved sword ready to strike, while the left hand is grasping the hair of an enemy with his head apparently turned away, and his arms hanging down behind his back.[39] The presence of the *r'* and *wsr* sign could point to a Ramessidian throne name which would identify the male figure with the pharaoh

Figure 2

[36] Cornelius comments: "The criteria for identifying the figure as Reshef have been the weapons, especially the *shield* [his italics], which is the only attribute which differentiates him from Ba'al" (1994:131).

[37] Cornelius excludes the figure from his discussion of bronze figures depicting the smiting god, since the figure is standing on a lion (another indicator for the presence of a depiction of Ba'al) which disqualifies it *a priori* as a representation of Reshef (1994:129).

[38] The seal was published by Starkey and Harding (1932:pl. 53:227).

[39] Cf. a similar depiction of an enemy in Keel and Uehlinger (1992:136, fig. 144a-b).

of Egypt.[40] However, the distinguishing object, i.e., the shield which can be used to identify Reshef, is missing in this depiction which could nevertheless be explained with the iconographic changes the motif underwent between the Late Bronze and Iron Age I.

Whatever the identification of the male figure on our scarab may result in, it establishes the affinity of divine and royal iconography which was prevalent in Egypt. The pharaoh was depicted in postures normally associated with the iconography of deities and divine attributes were ascribed to him. Thus the smiting male figure found on an Iron Age IA scarab enhances our awareness of the warrior motif in showing the enemy in his subjugated position, held from the hair by the pharaoh/god.

Another aspect of the smiting god motif is found on a steatite scarab from Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir), **Figure 3**, coming from a Late Bronze grave which was reused until the Iron Age IIC (720/700-600 B.C.). Stylistically it belongs to the 19th-22th. Dynasty (1295-900 B.C.). The base measures 13,4 x 9 mm, and incised on it a depiction can be found which is clearly exhibiting a strong Egyptian influence.[41]

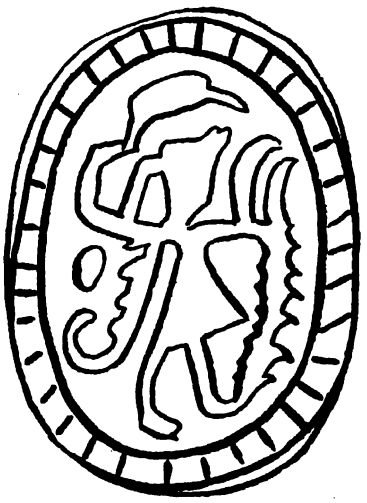

Figure 3

The scarab base portrays a male figure, again in a striding position, facing toward the right. He is wearing a wide dress of which the details are not discernible[42] and a headdress with two bullhorns protruding from it. A long zigzagged streamer is attached to the back of the helmet which is curved upwards at the end.[43] The right hand is raised above the head ready to strike, holding a curved sword with a broad blade, while the left hand is

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[40] Keel and Uehlinger comment with regard to the presence of this motif in the Iron Age IA: "Hingegen ist der über seine Feinde triumphierende und sie dominierende König vielfältig weiter tradiert worden. Mit nur wenigen Belegen ist die klassische Ikone des sogenannten *'Niederschlagens der Feinde'* [his italics] vertreten, bei der der Pharao ein Krummschwert über einem niedergesunkenen Feind schwingt" (1992:135f.; cf Keel, 1972:270-276).

[41] The seal was published by Tufnell (1953:368, pl. 43/43A, 22; cf. also Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger 1990:314, fig. 91; and Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:86, fig. 87a).

[42] Judging the form, it could be the patterned dress typical for Ba'al-Seth.

[43] This headdress is typical of Ba'al-Seth (cf. Eggler, 1992:163, no. 71, 78, and 92). The corpus of seals discussed by Eggler, however, does not depict Ba'al-Seth with warrior attributes, but rather inactive, mostly standing, once on an animal, probably a horse.

grasping the head of a snake with two horns. Behind the back of the figure is a sundisk, and the scene is surrounded by a rope border.

The identification of the scene does not present any major problems, and the figure can be readily recognized as Ba'al-Seth,[44] the amalgamation of a Semitic and an Egyptian deity.[45] Although he is often found in a more passive stance, standing on the back of a horse (cf. note 43), he has warrior attributes and here is depicted as fighting the horned snake representing in Egyptian mythology the Apophis-snake, and the chaos waters in Canaanite myth (cf. Uehlinger, 1990:517). It is interesting to note that the enemy has been substituted by an animal which nevertheless exemplifies the equivalent threat.[46]

Figure 4

Taking the Palestinian context of that find into consideration, it appears that the warrior motif of the scarab had a protective function against the destructive foreign elements threatening the region (cf. Eggler, 1992:163).[47]

Our next depiction of the warrior motif is represented by a bronze figure from Megiddo (Tell el-Mutesellim) which has been found in stratum VB which can be dated from 1050-1000 B.C. (**Figure 4**). This close dating and the fact that the find stems from a Palestinian site, enhances the significance of the object for the present study.[48] A male figure is standing in a passant position, wearing a short folded kilt with bands across the chest,

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[44] "Die beiden Hörner, die statt des Uräus an der Stirn zu sehen sind, das vom Hinterkopf lang herabhängende Band, die Schlange mit zwei Hörnern und die Sonnenscheibe hinter der Figur machen deutlich, dass wir es nicht mit dem König, sondern mit Ba'al-Seth als Schlangenbekämpfer zu tun haben" (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:314).

[45] Ba'al was presumably introduced into Egypt during the Hyksos period in the 17th century B.C., and by the beginning of the Iron Age his characteristic attributes had been merged with those of the Egyptian Seth (cf. Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:202, 308). Cf. also the seal from Tell ed-Dab'a (Avaris) showing the smiting god in the context of the snake (Uehlinger, 1990:512-522, fig. 1).

[46] "Durch die Verbindung von Ba'al und Seth als Schlangenbekämpfer ist die Schlange, die in Ägypten ein Symbol der Bedrohlichkeit des nächtlichen Dunkels und in Kanaan eines des anstürmenden Meeres war, zu einem Symbol des Bedrohlichen überhaupt geworden, der sie bekämpfende Gott entsprechend zu einem Retter schlechthin ..." (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:86).

[47] Cf. the cult stela from Tell Ashara (Terqa) from the time of Tukkulti-Ninurta (888-884 B.C.) which shows the Assyrian weather-god in a smiting posture with an ax fighting the horned snake (Keel, 1972:96, fig. 142).

[48] The original publication is Loud (1948:pl. 239:31). The figure is 10,8 cm in height and was found in field no. a 268, square 0/14, sanctuary BB, provenance S=2050.1.

and a conical crown with feathers on the sides (*atef* crown?). The features of his face are pronounced. His right hand is raised above his head in a striking position holding a club attached to the front of the headdress. In his left hand he is holding an eight-figure shaped small Hittite shield (Cornelius, 1994:131) which seems, surprisingly, to be facing downwards without a protective function. The whole figure must have been mounted on a platform, since the tangs on the feet are intact. The value of the figure lies in the fact that both weapons are still intact which allows for a closer identification. Especially the shield serves as a marker for the distinction between Ba'al and Reshef.[49] Thus we would be confronted with a typical portrayal of Reshef as a warrior stemming from the turn of the 2nd to the 1st millennia B.C.[50]

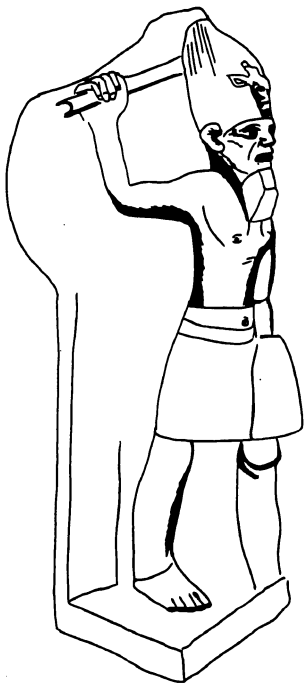

Figure 5

Before we return to miniature art, a final figure representing the warrior motif, a limestone sculpture from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (39.2.215), should be mentioned (**Figure 5**). Without an ascertained archaeological context, the figure has been dated to the late period, most probably from the 20th-26th Dynasty (1150-600 B.C.).

We follow Cornelius' description: "It depicts a bearded god, wearing the white crown, with the head of a gazelle depicted on it. He is

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[49] Cornelius draws the attention to a bronze found in the Louvre (E 10486 [AF 587]) which is 13,2 cm high, mounted on a pedestal which has an inscription on it reading: *dd.n ršp r mȝ't sȝt r' dj(j) 'nḫ ḥr sȝ ḥȝpj* 'Reshef said to Ma'at, the daughter of Re': I give life to Horus, the son of Hapi....' (1994:132). Although the weapon of the raised hand is lost, the right hand holds a shield, an arrow and a bow. While the figure can be identified with Reshef, it also bears characteristics of Horus, namely, the face and hairlock, demonstrating the fact that images from the Saite period display syncretistic tendencies.

[50] The depiction is typical for the Late Bronze Age depiction of Reshef which raises the question if the object can be taken as representative of the Iron Age IB stratum in which it has been found or if we are dealing with a relic from the Late Bronze Age. Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Für die EZ I typisch sind nicht der Waffen schwingende Reschef und der kämpfende Ba'al-Seth, sondern Darstellungen dieser Götter, die sie dominierend auf Tieren stehend zeigen..." (1992:130). A continued usage may, however, be an indicator for a continuous popularity of the motif, whereas it is important to note that an iconographic motif was not terminated suddenly, but rather faded out from popular usage.

dressed in a kilt and stands in a menacing pose, with a small shield in front" (1994:133). It is not altogether clear, what kind of hand-weapon the figure is holding, since it appears to have been broken off on the left side. The figure is depicted in the typical striding position, while the shield and the head of the gazelle portrayed on the front of the crown leave no doubt as to the identification of the god with Reshef. Thus the depiction of the smiting god during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age I is associated with Ba'al-Seth and Reshef which are portrayed with almost identical attributes, while the main differentiating factor lies in the usage of the hand-shield for Reshef, viz., the association with an animal. Although Reshef is depicted in warrior fashion, the shield, as a defensive weapon demonstrates his role as protector, especially with regard to sickness and health (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:412). Ba'al-Seth seems to have been connected closer to the weather-god, as other motifs below will show.

There is a distinct chronological gap before the smiting god motif reoccurs in the iconography of the ANE. Only toward the latter half of the period under consideration does the smiting god reappear on iconographic objects, except for a silhouette-inlay made from ivory found at Samaria, dating from the 8th century B.C. (**Figure 6**), which shows a male figure standing in a striding position, wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. With his right hand raised above his head he is holding a club ready to strike, while with his left hand he is grasping the head of an enemy who is kneeling in front of him with his hands raised toward the standing figure.

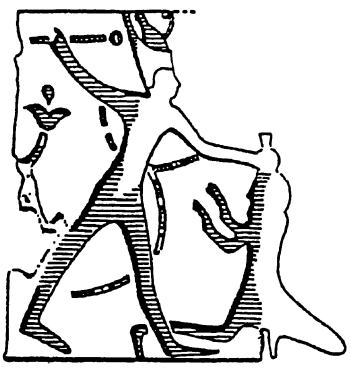

Figure 6

There is a Lotus flower behind the back of the smiting figure which is an unfamiliar combination, pointing to the Levantine origin of this object (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:298f., fig. 262b). Although the depiction is very similar to the smiting god motif, the figure should be identified with the king in his typical posture (cf. **Figure 2**), denoting his dominion over the enemies. There are no attributes which would clearly identify him as a deity. Thus the picture is only used for comparative purposes here.[51]

[51] Although the iconography of the object from Samaria is very close to the normal depiction of the smiting god motif. However, the smiting god usually is not portrayed together with an enemy.

Figure 7

There is a cylinder seal in the Brooklyn Museum without a certain archaeological context, designated broadly as coming from Mesopotamia (**Figure 7**). It is made from chalcedony, measuring 31,4 mm in height and 13,5 mm in diameter, and has been dated 730-600 B.C., since the style is Neo-Assyrian or even Neo-Babylonian showing considerable skill in the modeling of the individual figures.[52] The impression shows a combat scene with a nude male figure at the center of the scene (cf. **Figure 39**). The male is in a kneeling position, wearing a beard and earrings or side curls, and his head is being held by two other male figures. To the left of the nude there is a male person with a long dress, wearing a tall crown. He stands with his left foot on the back of the nude figure, while his left hand is holding the head of the naked figure. His right hand points a short sword or dagger toward the throat of the naked figure. The figure to the right of the naked figure is in a similar position with his foot raised onto the thighs of the nude. He is wearing a short kilt, grasping the head of the naked figure with one hand, while the other is raised in the smiting position above his head holding an ax. To the right of the scene there is a worshipper in an adoring gesture facing the scene, and above there are celestial symbols (seven-star, star, and crescent).

Noveck contents: "No gods are represented in the contest scene, yet a worshipper points towards the scene as if towards a deity or sacred symbols" (1975:57). It is exactly that element plus the divine attributes of the attackers which could identify this scene as representing the smiting god motif. There is a close parallel to the scene, found on a cylinder seal from Assur dating from the 9th to the 7th centuries B.C. Only the worshipper has been replaced by depictions of the 'tree of life' denoting the religious connotation of the scene.[53] A possible identification of the smiting god would be Adad (Moortgat, 1940:67f., 141, pl. 73:608).

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[52] The seal was published by Noveck (1975:57, fig. 41). The dating of the seal has been undertaken from comparison with royal palace paintings and reliefs.

[53] It is interesting to note a possible interpretation of the scene: "It has been interpreted as illustrating an episode from the Epic of Gilgamesh - the slaying of Humbaba, the monstrous guardian of the cedar forest, by Gilgamesh, the epic hero and legendary king of Uruk, with the help of his friend Enkidu" (1975:57).

With the rise of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires, new iconographic elements were introduced to the ANE which displayed distinct Western features. Although the motifs are reminiscent of the smiting god imagery and thus constitute a certain renaissance of that motif, the attributes have clearly been transferred to other deities than those representing the motif so far. The next three examples show the smiting god as he appeared in the iconographic evidence dating from the Persian empire. Interestingly, all three specimens stem from the Phoenician coastal line, from 'Atlit, displaying the artwork of the Phoenician seal-cutters which often merged various tradition into the local Phoenician style. Especially the Western Greek influence is detectable.

Figure 8 shows a scarab from 'Atlit found in tomb L 21 which was dated from 500-352 B.C., whereas the object dating would set the limits for this object from 450-332 B.C. The scarab is made from carnelian and the base measures 16 mm in height and 12 mm in breadth.[54] The style has been classified by Galling as archaic-Greek (1941:155), and the scarab bears an inscription incised into the spaces in between the various elements along the border of the scene, reading עוחם 'Awitam' which was most probably the name of the seal-owner.[55]

Figure 8

The scarab portrays a male figure in a passant position facing toward the left. He appears to be naked, but a lion-skin indicated by the lion-paws hanging from his shoulder, is discernible. He is wearing a pointed beard, and a hat as a headdress. The right hand is raised in the familiar gesture above his head, holding a club. The left hand[56] is extended toward the front holding a bow. Thus two different warrior

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[54] The original publication is Johns (1933:75, fig. 41); cf. also Galling (1941:155, 189, pl. 8:110a). The seals from 'Atlit are housed in the Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem.

[55] The name is Phoenician, but the reading may not be correct: "In its present form, the name is unknown among the Semitic onomastica, which would lead to the question, if the reading is correct, or if we have indeed a new name in front of us. There is an עוחן found in the Palmyrene inscriptions, meaning 'helper', whereas the final nun is a suffix.... The Arabic *'atā* 'to be proud, go beyond bounds' seems also possible..." (Klingbeil, 1992a:80).

[56] Since the depiction is aspective, it is difficult to determine the right or left arm.

motifs are combined here.[57] While the overall figure appears to be clearly influenced by Greek iconographic motifs, the head of the figure seems to betray its Phoenician origin.

Figure 9 adds some interesting features to the motif of Heracles as the smiting god. It is a scarab of green jasper, found in tomb L 20 at 'Atlit, dated 450-332 B.C. (cf. above). The seal base measures 14 x 10 mm and is surrounded by a rope border which is typical for Phoenician craftsmanship.[58] Depicted on the seal there is a naked male figure standing in a striding position facing to the left. He is wearing a lion-skin around his shoulders of which the front-paws are crosswise folded over his chest, while the tail is hanging down behind his back. The head of the lion is probably, in typical fashion, covering the head of the male figure, although this is not determinable with certainty. The figure features a pointed beard. With his left hand he is holding the club raised above his head, whereas the club ends in three round objects. His right hand is grasping the right hind leg of a lion which is facing downwards along the seal border, though with its head twisted upwards. Behind the male figure, there is dog in a running position vertically inserted along the right border of the image, apparently filling a gap in the design of the scenery. The dog seems to be somewhat disconnected from the action that is taking place in the image. The lion-skin and the club readily identify the figure as Heracles with the added 'Herr der Tiere' or lion-conqueror motif. Another additional element, the dog behind Heracles, demonstrates once more the Phoenician tendency to combine different iconographic traditions and merge them into a new one, whereas these combinations where not only motivated artistically, but reflect the religious syncretism prevalent in Phoenicia during that period. Culican correlates the dog to the 'dog of Ba'al' an iconographic tradition going back to the 2nd millennium B.C. (1969:88), which would point to an iconographic identification of Heracles with the Phoenician god Melqart, the Ba'al of Sidon which is substantiated by

Figure 9

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57 Comments Galling: "Der Bildtypus ist eine Kombination von 'Herakles mit dem Bogen' und 'Herakles mit der Keule', zwei aus der archaisch-griechischen Glyptik bekannten Motiven" (1941:155).

58 The original publication is Johns (1933:70f., fig. 30).

Figure 10

the stance of the figure.[59] While it is not possible to trace the line of development with certainty, the connection to the Canaanite Reshef as a predecessor of Heracles seems more than likely.[60]

Our final example of the smiting god motif (**Figure 10**) also comes from 'Atlit (tomb L 20), and follows the two preceding specimens to a large extent. It is found on a scarab made from green jasper, measuring 16 x 12,5 x 9 mm, also dated to 450-332 B.C. (Johns, 1933:71, fig. 31). It shows a naked figure[61] in a kneeling or running position. The object behind his back could be a lion-skin or a quiver. His left hand is raised above his head holding a similar club as in **Figure 9**, and the right hand is clenching a bow. The whole scene is surrounded by a rope border. While the depiction of Heracles holding two weapons is in tune with other representations (e.g., **Figure 8**), the position of the god varies somewhat from the normal striding stance. It is possible to think that the position of the figure is due to the limited space on the scarab, but from comparison with numismatic material from the Persian period which shows the Persian king in the same position, it can be seen that we have an allusion to the popular Persian iconographic motif of the hunting king. Thus we would be confronted with a certain degree of identification between Heracles and the Persian king made by his Phoenician subjects (cf. Klingbeil, 1992b:109f.).

5.2.2.2. Archer Scenes

The following group of iconographic objects will include depictions of gods using the bow and arrow. One has to differentiate between active and passive archer scenes, i.e., scenes in which the bow is actively used as a weapon pointing an arrow against an enemy, and scenes in which the bow

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[59] "If one considers the posture and action of Herakles on the seals, the affinity to the representation of the Phoenician god Melqart, the Ba'al of Sidon, becomes rather apparent, while Herakles apparently was the Greek adaptation of that Phoenician deity. This is confirmed by a bilingual inscription found in Malta" (Klingbeil, 1992b:109, cf. also Smith, 1962:176-183).

[60] Since there is a chronological gap in the Iron Age II for the depiction of Reshef as the smiting god, one needs to establish the 'missing link'.

[61] In this depiction the male parts are clearly visible.

is only carried as armory.[62]

According to our classification system, **Figure 11** only indirectly pertains to the archer scenes motif group, since it depicts the god in the blessing position, while the archer can clearly be identified as the pharaoh. However, since the shooting of the arrows is the central imagery in this scene, we have included this cylinder-seal among the archer scenes. The seal stems from Beth-Shean (Beisan) and has been dated from the Late Bronze Age to the beginning of the Iron Age I.[63] The style is clearly Egyptian and depicts the pharaoh shooting at a target. He is wearing the Blue Crown with an uraeus attached to the front, and a cartouche above his head reading *wsr-ma'at Ra'* identifies him as Ramses II (1301-1254 B.C.). Below the target there are two bound Asiatic prisoners who are the actual aim of the shooting practice. The god on the left of the target is extending a curved sword toward the pharaoh. He is wearing a short kilt and the White Crown with streamers attached to it, holding the *ankh* sign in his other hand. Protruding from the forehead or crown there is the head of a capride, perhaps a gazelle. These features would identify the god with Reshef presenting the Asiatic prisoners to the pharaoh as a symbol of the pharaoh's dominion over his Canaanite provinces.[64] While the scene does not depict a god in an archer scene, it nevertheless indirectly demonstrates the approval of the warrior god for this activity, and indicates his involvement in the imagery.[65]

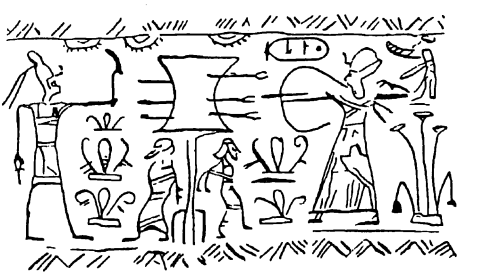

Figure 11

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[62] The bow will also occur in other motif groups, while the differentiating criteria for the inclusion in this group is the exclusiveness of the bow as a weapon. Images in which the bow is only carried as part of the armory are described elsewhere. Furthermore, the bow both in active and passive scenes will also appear in the group of objects representing a mixed form with warrior and God of heaven attributes.

[63] The seal was originally published by Rowe (1930:31, pl. 34:4); cf. also Parker (1949:no. 30) and Keel and Uehlinger (1992:100-102, fig. 113).

[64] This becomes apparent if one takes into consideration that the seal stems from Beth Shean. Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Er [Reshef] würde dann auf unserem Rollsiegel als Stadtgott von Bet-Shean dem Pharao Ramses II. den Sieg präsentieren" (1992:102).

[65] Nougayrol concludes: "Le site archéologique (temple), la taille inaccoutumée de l'objet, la facture même de la gravure, dont les incisions fines ne permettent guère une empreinte sur argile, le fait inusité que le Ba'al [Reshef] tend la khopesh de la main gauche ..., le caractère purement commémoratif de la scène, nous inclinent à penser qu'il s'agit d'un cylindre votif, offert par le pharaon même en guise de remerciement à la divinité qui avait permis sa victoire" (1939:64). The gesture of the god extending the

Figure 12

Figure 12 shows an archer scene which depicts a deity shooting at a *Mischwesen*. The motif is found on a cylinder seal with unknown provenance from the Marcopoli Collection. It is made from serpentine and measures 41 mm in height and 11 mm in diameter. The style is Neo-Assyrian and it has been dated from 900-800 B.C.[66] The scene portrays a male archer facing to the left holding a bow which is drawn to full extent. There are wings attached to the back of the figure. He is aiming at a *Mischwesen*, a scorpion man with wings and bird's feet (cf. **Figure 13**: a cylinder seal impression from Nimrud on which the same *Mischwesen* are shown in the 'Herr der Tiere' motif). Above the scene there are celestial symbols (star and crescent), and there is a rhombe[67] at the bottom behind the back of the *Mischwesen*. The depiction is typical of the Neo-Assyrian hunting scenes which constitute a large amount of the iconographic motifs found on miniature art from Assyria.[68] Normally the huntsman is identified with the Neo-Assyrian king, but in this instance the wings add a mythological dimension to the picture. Mythologizations like that are known from the Neo-Assyrian period, and they are applied to both

Figure 13

curved sword toward the pharaoh has to be understood as a pledge of victory (cf. Keel, 1972:pl. 21-22).

66 The original publication is Teissier (1984:150, fig. 144).

67 The meaning of the rhombe in ANE iconography is not altogether clear but seems to have been used as a apotropaic symbol. Comments Uehlinger: "Auch der Rhombus ist als Symbol nicht einer bestimmten Gottheit zugeordnet, sondern signalisiert die sich im Kult eröffnende Heiligkeit der himmlischen Sphäre bzw. den von ihr ausgehenden Schutz" (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:328).

68 The motifs represented on the seals stemming from Assyria during the Neo-Assyrian period, are different from the subjects portrayed on reliefs and other monumental art. Comments Collon with regard to the corpus of seals from Nimrud: "The two main subjects are the perennial hunting and banquet scenes. The huntsman is always an archer and he can be kneeling ..., standing ..., or shooting from a chariot ... at his prey which is generally a bull, sometimes a winged bull or a sphinx" (1987:75).

animals and human figures. An identification of the god in the archer position is difficult to undertake, but a possible candidate would be Ninurta, the patron deity of war and hunting, but the weather god Adad would also qualify for such a scene, as a cylinder seal from Gezer shows (see below **Figure 15**).

Our next sample (**Figure 14**) shows a more passive archer scene, and is located on a cylinder seal from Megiddo (found in the water system in square P-5), measuring 29 x 12 mm. Archaeologically it has been dated from 900-600 B.C. which corresponds roughly to its style, i.e., Neo-Assyrian.[69]

The scene depicts a male figure of which only the outline is distinguishable. He has his one leg lifted in a stepping position, resting on the back of a small griffin[70] which is facing away from the figure. The man is wearing a long beard, but no headdress is visible. He is holding a staff behind his back on which the Venus star with eight rays is mounted.[71] With his other hand, the man is extending a bow[72] toward a big winged griffin which is raised onto his hind legs in an attacking position. There is a seven-star above the griffin and again a rhombe between the two main protagonists. It appears that we are again confronted with a mythologized hunting season. The male figure cannot be identified as a god without hesitancy, but the whole image has a cosmic and mythological dimension, expressed by the celestial symbols and the *Mischwesen*. Furthermore, the depiction is not along the lines of a standard hunting scene, but the bow is only used passively in a protective gesture, and no real combat is taking place. It is interesting to note that the *Mischwesen* represent a threat to the cosmic order and are negatively identified. Comment

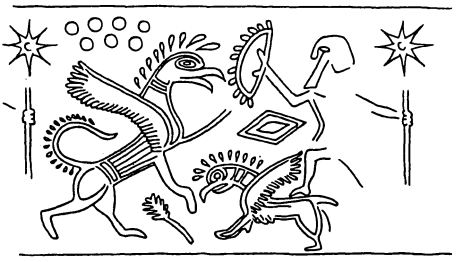

Figure 14

[69] The seal was originally published by Lamon (1935:pl. 8:6); cf. also Keel and Uehlinger (1992:329-331, fig. 282c).

[70] The griffin and other winged *Mischwesen* were a popular motif in Palestine during the Iron Age IIB, influenced by Egyptian iconography. They were associated with solar categories often epitomizing the highest solar god (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:244, 251).

[71] It is not altogether clear, if staff and star are connected to each other. The staff may be a weapon, and the star a celestial symbol without necessarily being linked together.

[72] We have identified the object as a bow, since the bow does not always have to be held in an active shooting position.

Keel and Uehlinger: "Kämpferische Auseinander-setzungen spielen sich auf den Zylindersiegeln haupsächlich im mythischen Bereich ab und dienen der Sicherung kosmischer Ordnungen. Die Protagonisten sind dementsprechend Mischwesen, Helden, Genien und Gottheiten" (1992:330).[73]

Along the same lines we find a series of fayence cylinder seals depicting the archer scene in a particular way. **Figure 15** shows a fayence[74] cylinder seal from Gezer dated 750-700 B.C.[75] The style is Neo-Assyrian and the material used for the seal fabrication identifies it as a massware product. It shows an anthropomorphic depiction of a god with wings pointing upwards and possibly also another pair of wings pointing downwards. The head is unfortunately indistinguishable and the headdress as a possible identifier, cannot be determined. He is wearing a long patterned dress. The god is holding a bow in a shooting position toward a horned snake. The object protruding backwards from the snake's neck may be an arrow which has pierced the animal already. The snake is coiled together in an upward perspective. In between the god and the snake there is an unidentified object which may be a distorted depiction of a rhombe (cf. Collon, 1987:84, no. 388; Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:47, fig. 53). The more likely interpretation of that object, however, would be the

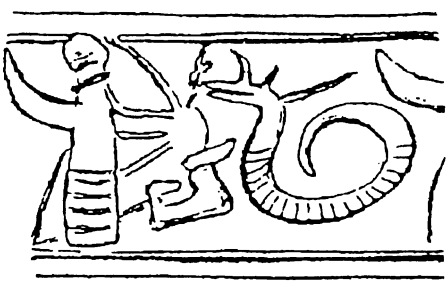

Figure 15

[73] It is interesting to note Lamon's original interpretation of the scene: "The impression would appear to represent the cosmological myth of the struggle between Bel (Marduk) and the dragon, especially in the form in which it is found in the apocryphal portion of the Book of Daniel (Bel and the Dragon, verse 27): 'Then Daniel took pitch and fat and hair and boiled them together; and he made lumps and put them into the dragon's mouth, and the dragon ate thereof and burst asunder.' The object which the bearded god is forcing upon the dragon cannot be a bow, in view of its form and the manner in which it is held; it is probably the bolus of fat, pitch, and hair" (1935:pl. 8:6 [description]). This interpretation reflects the tendency to use iconographic images as illustrating ANE texts, viz., of reading ANE texts into iconographic images. There is, however, a substantial time gap between this image and the apocryphal book Bel and the Dragon which is usually dated to the 3rd or 2nd centuries B.C. (cf. Moore, 1992:26f.).

[74] "Das Stück ist zwar nur unzulänglich ohne Materialangabe publiziert, dürfte aber aus Fritte sein und aus einer assyrischen oder nordsyrischen Massenproduktionsstätte stammen, deren Produkte im 7. Jh. in alle Teile des Weltreiches gelangten..." (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:331).

[75] The seal was originally published by Macalister (1912:347, no. 42). We could only establish the height of the object, i.e., 29 mm.

depiction of the horned dragon on which the war-god Ninurta is standing, and which is a second representation of the god himself.[76] The scene would thus represent the struggle between Ninurta and Anzu, or in more general terms, the weather/war-god against the chaotic forces. The horned snake would thus be a Canaanite adaptation of the Anzu-dragon representing the chaotic forces. The arrows used by Ninurta would represent lightning used as a weapon by the war god.[77]

As a final example of the archer motif, a cylinder seal from Susa will be presented (**Figure 16**). Although there are no further archaeological notes, the approximate dating is from the 8th to the 7th centuries B.C. The style is somewhat different from the typical Neo-Assyrian depiction and can be identified as Elamite betraying the place of origin for the seal. It measures 20 mm in height and 8 mm in diameter and was originally published by Amiet (1972:282, no. 2190, pl. 188:2190).

The seal shows a hunting scene with two *Mischwesen*. The *Mischwesen* to the left has a fish body, bird legs, wings and a human upper body which seems to be turned backwards in a shooting position. The human head features a beard and wears a low cap as a headdress. The *Mischwesen* to the right consists of a winged capride body with a long upwardly curved tail in a jumping posture. The upper body is also human and in a similar position as the other creature, while the headdress is a high tiara usually associated with the king. Below the *Mischwesen* to the right there is a dog in a standing position with its head slightly bend downwards. It almost appears as if the *Mischwesen* would be jumping over the dog. The interesting element of the scene is the fact that both *Mischwesen* are aiming with their bows in the same

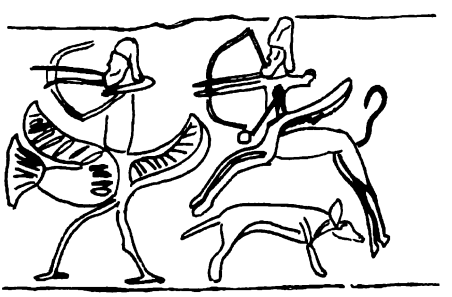

Figure 16

[76] The Anzu-myth describes this metamorphosis of Ninurta: "Die Göttin Maḫ, seine Mutter, sagt zu ihm: 'Hänge den Bogen um, die Pfeile mögen Gift hintragen. Wie beim bösen Drachen soll sich dein Aussehen verändern'. Ninurta verwandelt sich in einen Drachen und speit Blitze. Diese Aussage ist frappierend, besagt sie doch, daß der gehörnte Drache, auf dem Ninurta fast immer abgebildet wird, er selbst ist, in seiner zweiten Erscheinungsform..." (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:126).

[77] Keel and Uehlinger identify the god on the cylinder seal with Adad, proposing that both Ninurta and Adad were "Individuationen des Wettergottes, die in Assyrien geradezu als Zwillingsgötter gegolten haben" (1992:331). Moortgat-Correns shows, however, that Adad had a messenger function in the mythological struggle between Ninurta and Anzu (1988:127).

direction. Although the lower animal bodies of the two creatures seem to be in juxtaposition, the upper bodies are facing the same direction pointing their arrows toward an imaginary enemy, since there is no indication of any aim for their shooting attempts. In similar scenes, there is usually an identifiable object against which the arrows are directed.[78] Hence, the immediate threat is removed, and the archer motif has become to some extent self-sufficient. This seal shows the universal popularity of the archer scene during the Iron Age IIB/C with its Mesopotamian variation.[79] The dog below the *Mischwesen* to the right seems somewhat disconnected from the scene, and similar observations with regard to its meaning can be made as for **Figure 9.**

5.2.2.3. The God with the Spear

Another typical depiction of ANE iconography is the god with the spear fighting the forces of chaos represented by the snake. We have selected three specimens which illustrate the motif. Interestingly all of them can be dated to the early part of the time period under consideration for this study. **Figure 17** shows a graffiti from Tell Lachish which is dated to the Late Bronze Age around 1300 B.C. It was found on the walls of the Egyptian-Canaanite temple on the tell.[80] Depicted on it there is a male figure of which only the upper body is portrayed. He is (possibly) wearing a beard and a conical crown as a head dress to which streamers are attached. It appears that the figure has slung a bow around his waste, although

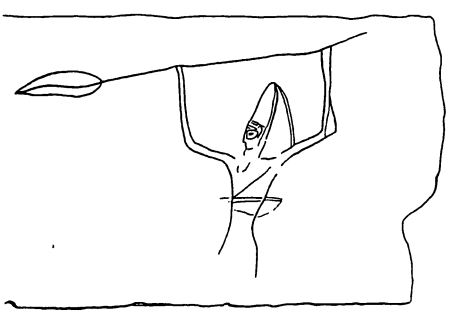

Figure 17

[78] Cf. a similar scene on a cylinder seal with unknown provenance from the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, which shows a *Mischwesen* with a human upper body holding a bow. He is wearing an angular, high, feathery headdress which is Babylonian and can be associated with the depiction of deities, but is also worn by the king. The arrows are directed against a griffin which is in flight (Collon, 1987:81, fig. 364).

[79] Wilkinson demonstrates the mythological connotations of archer scenes in Egyptian iconography (1994:184f., fig. 133-134).

[80] The graffiti was published by Ussishkin (1978:18); cf. also Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger (1990:309-321, fig. 96); Keel and Uehlinger (1992:86f., fig. 86); and Cornelius (1994:162, BR18). The object was found in area P, level VI, locus 31612 in a room leading to the side entrance of the main hall in the temple. The location is not central, but the scene depicts a popular motif.

such a depiction lacks parallels.[81] The god has raised both arms above his head holding a javelin with a broad blade. The spear seems to be somewhat out of proportion and is pointed slightly downwards as if to be thrust at an imaginary enemy.

The identification of the scene does not present any major questions and we are confronted with the motif of Ba'al-Seth fighting the horned snake, similar to the depiction found in **Figure 3**, only with a different weapon. One can summarize with Keel and Uehlinger:

> Die aus dem ägypto-kanaanäischen Tempel auf dem Tell stammende Ritzzeichnung eines Gottes, der mit beiden Händen eine mächtige Lanze über seinem Kopf hält ..., ist als Kombination des kanaanäischen Ba'al, der die Meeresschlange (Litanu/Leviatan) bekämpft, mit dem ägyptischen Seth, der die Apophisschlange überwindet, zu verstehen... (1992:84).[82]

The interesting fact that the snake is not visible, leaves open the question if the motif had been traditionalized in such a way that the complete depiction was no longer necessary.[83]

A more complete portrayal, i.e., including the serpent, is found on our next sample The scene in **Figure 18** is on a scarab of unknown provenance housed in the Musées Royaux, Brussels (E 7036b). It is made from steatite and measures 20,4 x 15,2 x 8,8 mm. Stylistically it has been assigned to the Ramessidian dynasties which corresponds to the period of 1300-1150 B.C. (Late Bronze Age IIB).[84] Depicted on it there is a winged figure wearing a short kilt with tassels. Although the body is anthropomorphic, the top part depicts the head of the Seth animal with long ears and a protruding snout.[85] The figure has a pair

Figure 18

[81] One has, of course, to keep in mind the sketchy character of a graffiti in which details are neglected.

[82] Keel has earlier on identified the god with Reshef (Keel and Schroer, 1985:17), but has abandoned that interpretation, and designates the scene now as depicting Ba'al-Seth (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:318).

[83] Taking into consideration that the object was found in Canaan (Palestine) raises the question as to what extent Ba'al-Seth was worshipped in Palestine at the end of the Bronze Age.

[84] The seal was published in: Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger (1990:310-312, fig. 84). There is an inscription reading *mrj ḏḥwtj* 'beloved of Thot'.

[85] The Seth-animal is not easily associated with any real animal, and seems to be similar to the griffin (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:233, n. 305).

Figure 19

of wings attached to its back which are typical of Ba'al and Seth and their combination during the Late Bronze Age.[86] With his one hand raised above his head, he is holding a long lance or javelin thrusting it down into a horned snake which he is grasping with the other hand. The tail of the snake is curved upwards behind the god.[87] Although the depiction is clearly Egyptian in style and the streamers that often betray the Egyptian-Canaanite combination of Ba'al-Seth are missing, the figure should be identified with this god, as comparative material clearly indicates: **Figure 19** shows a steatite scarab from a private collection dating to about 1500-1300 B.C. It depicts Ba'al-Seth in a completely anthropomorphic way besides the characteristic wings wearing the White Crown with the long-eared Seth-animal attached to the front of it, and streamers at the back (cf. Cornelius, 1994:215). He can be seen thrusting a spear downwards into the body of a snake.

Figure 20

Our last example of the god with the spear motif is a bas-relief found on the basalt stela from Ruğm el-'Abd (Transjordan) discovered in 1851 (**Figure 20**).[88] The stela unfortunately has been broken off at the base, rendering the image incomplete from below the thighs of the central figure of the scene. The stela has been dated between the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., since the skirt and other iconographic details find parallels in Phoenician art of the 8th/7th centuries B.C. (Warmenbol, 1983:67-70). The image depicts a male figure in a standing position with his head turned toward the right.[89] He is wearing a striped

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[86] "Es lässt sich leicht eine Reihe von Siegelamuletten zusammenstellen, die den engen Zusammenhang, wenn nicht die Identität zwischen Seth und Ba'al, dem geflügelten Seth und dem geflügelten Ba'al ... demonstriert" (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:304f., fig. 69-76).

[87] "Eine gehörnte, den Kosmos bedrohend Schlange findet sich in Vorderasien spätestens seit der Kassitenzeit..." (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger:1990:310).

[88] Cf. Warmenbol (1983:63-75) who provides an abundance of bibliographic material concerning the stela, and Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger (1990:320f., fig. 97).

[89] The torso of the figure is facing the observer, while his head is turned sideways. The depiction appears somewhat aspective.

short kilt, and a cap fitting tightly around his head without covering the ears. The cap is pointed toward the back and ends in a long streamer which is vertically pointing downwards ending in an upward curl, while the curl has been interpreted as representing a sundisk and a crescent. The 'warrior' is holding a spear with both hands with the left hand raised above his head clutching the end of the spear. The spear has a broad blade and is pointed downwards as if the figure is ready to thrust the weapon into an object below, although his face is not turned toward the imaginary enemy. To the left side of the figure, there is an animal in an upright position of which the bottom part has been broken off. The animal is mostly interpreted as a lion, although the upright position is somewhat unusual.[90] The style of the stela reveals Egyptian influences. While there was no physical Egyptian presence in Moab during that period, the style was imported via the Phoenician coastal cities which proved to be overly accepting of Egyptian and other foreign iconographic influences. The image has been interpreted as either representing a warrior or a divinity, whereas the decisive factor evolves around the presence of the sundisk and crescent which would be indicators for the depiction of a deity. Warmenbol identifies the scene as a portrayal of Kemoš, the national Moabite god, adducing Ugaritic texts (Kemoš = *kmṯ*): "Il s'agit d'incantations devant protéger le récitant contre les morsures de serpent" (Warmenbol, 1983:74). However, if one considers the posture, the streamer, and our preceding illustrations, it becomes clear that the Moabite stela is following in the tradition of Ba'al-Seth the serpent slayer (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:320). Perhaps we are confronted with the Moabite adaptation of the god with a possible change of designation.

The motif of the god with the spear has revolved around the depiction of the serpent slayer Ba'al-Seth in the form of a combination of Egyptian and Asiatic iconographic characteristics which predominantly took place during the end of the Late Bronze and the Iron Age I, although the stela from Moab illustrates the continuance of that iconographic motif, possibly by way of reintroduction to the Levant via the Phoenician iconographic workshops. Concludes Keel:

> Die Identifizierung der beiden Gestalten [Ba'al and Seth] in der SB IIB und EZ I hat durch eine gewisse Loslösung vom Natursubstrat zu einer eindrücklichen und kämpferischen Göttergestalt geführt, die in grundsätzlicher Weise energisch im

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[90] Against that interpretation: "Il faut y reconnaître un rapace et non un lion. Il subsiste des traces du bec et de l'aile normalement vsible; l'oiseau regarde aussi vers la droite..." (1983:67). Although Warmenbol derives his observations from the study of the original object, it is difficult to identify a bird of prey on the stela. Especially the flat snout would indicate the portrayal of a feline.

Dienste des Rechts und der Ordnung gegen alle diese bedrohenden Chaosmächte vorgeht (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:320).

5.2.2.4. The God/dess in Arms

This motif group will concentrate on images depicting gods with warrior attributes which will be identified by the arsenal of weapons they are wearing. In most of the cases the scenes are passive portrayals of the warrior motif, i.e., the gods are merely carrying the weapons without actively using them in contrast to the smiting god motif.[91] Interestingly, all depictions stem from Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals dating from the 9th to 7th centuries B.C.

An intricate and clear depiction of the motif can be seen on a photograph from a cylinder seal impression of which the present location is not known (**Figure 21**).[92] According to comparative material the image could be dated to the late 9th and early 8th century B.C., since the cult of Ninurta was at its peak during that period.[93] The image depicts a god standing on a horned dragon between two high standards. The bearded god is facing toward the left and is wearing the feathery horned crown of Assyrian deities. He is clothed in a knee-long skirt and is wearing a long robe over it which is intricately ornamented with hexagons. He is carrying an array of weapons: an ax in his left hand, two quivers and bows crosswise

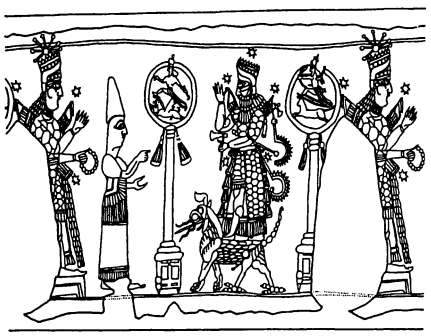

Figure 21

[91] Depictions of gods in armor with added weather-god attributes (e.g., sun-rays or water-streams) will be discussed below. It appears that this classification is somewhat artificial, since the affinity between warrior and god of heaven attributes is very close. Our differentiation has to take place on the phenomenological level, and not on the interpretative, since often a figure displaying exclusively warrior attributes can be identified with a weather-god, viz., Ba'al.

[92] The photograph was part of Prof. A. Moortgat's estate, and has been published by U. Moortgat-Correns (1988:123-130, fig. 5a-b). The measurements are not clear, but if the photograph has been taken 1:1 than the seal would have been 45 mm in height.

[93] After comparing the various iconographic details (dress, weapons, priest), Moortgat-Correns comes to the conclusion: "Nimmt man alles zusammen und bedenkt, daß der Kult Ninurtas sicher seinen Höhepunkt im 9. Jh. gehabt hat - das geht auch aus den Texten von Assurnasirpal II. bis Šamši-Adad V. deutlich hervor -, so dürfte eine Datierung unseres Siegels in die Zeit von Šamši-Adad V. oder Adad-nirari III., d. h. in das letzte Viertel des 9. Jh., das meiste für sich haben und am wahrscheinlichsten sein" (1988:130).

over his shoulders behind his back, another ax on his back, and two sickle swords attached to his belt and a quiver.[94] All around the figure small stars are depicted, marking him and his weapons as divine. His right hand is raised. The animal on which the god is standing is a *Mischwesen* incorporating body parts of various animals. From its mouth comes forth a weapon in the form of a triple forked lightning. The two standards are ending in an oval plaque on which two gods are depicted: one is running on a winged dragon which emanates the forked lightning, and he is holding a sickle sword with his one hand. The other god is in an identical stance on a quadruped (a bull?), pointing a bow. Facing the god there is a priest who is raising both hands in adoring gestures toward the god. He is wearing a high cap which is pointed toward the top. Behind his back there is a female goddess standing on a pedestal. She is also wearing a bow and quiver behind her back, holding a corona of pearls in her hand.

We largely follow Moortgat-Correns' identification of the scene which shows the Assyrian god Ninurta standing on his animal which functions as a depiction of himself in another form (cf. our remarks to **Figure 15**). The gods in the standards[95] represent the image of Ninurta (again in twofold form) in his stance of fighting the Anzu serpent, while the other god may be his messenger god Adad with the bow. The goddess can be readily identified with Ishtar, since the way of depiction is typical for her portrayal on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals. Moortgat-Correns concludes: "Ich sehe also in der Darstellung Ninurtas auf seinem siegreichen Drachen die Wiedergabe seines Kultbildes, so wie es im 9. Jh. zur Zeit Šamši-Adad V./Adad-niraris III. in seinem Tempel zu Nimrud ... gestanden hat..." (1988:130).[96]

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[94] We cannot detect the long sword mentioned by Moortgat-Correns (1988:124).

[95] "Es handelt sich bei den beiden Standarten zweifellos um Feldzeichen, die die Assyrer auf ihren Kriegszügen mit sich führten und die, aufgepflanzt auf den Streitwagen, den Truppen voranzogen" (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:127).

[96] There is a legend on the seal which has not been reproduced in the line drawing of the original photograph. Following Kessler, it reads: "... des Aššur-šumu-iddina, des Priesters des *Ninurta*, ... des Adad, die *den Kriegszug durchführen. Ninurta* (und) Adad von Kalḫu [his italics]" (*apud* Moortgat-Correns, 1988:134). One has to mention that philologically it is not clear, if Ninurta (^{d}MAŠ = line 5) or Nergal (^{d}MAŠ.MAŠ = line 3) is meant, or the second MAŠ in line 3 has a different meaning (cf. Kessler *apud* Moortgat-Correns, 1988:134). It is interesting to note that there is a certain correlation between the legend and the depiction which is not a common feature of ANE iconography.

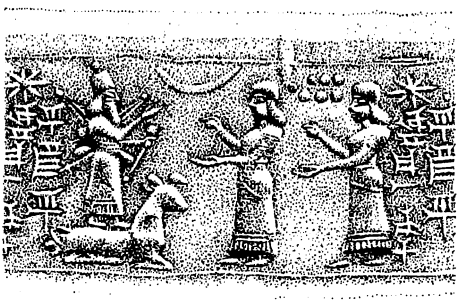

Figure 22

Our next example (**Figure 22**) of the armed god motif shows a cylinder seal from Natanya. It is a surface find in the Neo-Assyrian style and can be dated to the 9th to 8th centuries B.C.[97] It has an inscription reading 'Bēl-ašarēdu, palace official'. The scene consists of two worshippers who are standing behind each other in a gesture of adoration before a god. Both are wearing long dresses and no headdress,[98] and have raised their arms in the typical Assyrian adoration gesture with one hand in a fist with the thumb pointing forwards, while the other hand is opened in a grasping gesture. The god is standing on a bull, the characteristic animal of the weather god Adad. He is armed with a bow and quiver on his back, a sword at his side, and a club in his hand. The other hand is raised in an open gesture receiving the adoration of the worshippers. He is wearing a beard and a high headdress ending in a globe which could be the stylized version of the feathery crown. Above the scene there is a crescent and a seven-star. The animal and posture indicate without question that we are confronted with a cult image of the weather god Adad receiving adoration from two worshippers/priests.

A similar motif is shown by **Figure 23**, a chalcedony cylinder seal from Persepolis. It is 40,5 mm in height and 19 mm in diameter. The seal can be dated to the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 8th centuries B.C.[99] The image depicts a complex adoration scene: on the right there is a male bearded god standing on a pedestal. He is dressed in the same fashion as Ninurta in **Figure 21**, being fully armed with ax, two quivers and bow, and a sword, although there is no sickle sword

Figure 23

97 The original publication is Stern (1973:12-13).

98 Although the depiction of the head could also be a schematic rendering of a flat cap.

99 The seal has been published by Vollenweider (1967:68, no. 75, pl. 35:1-4, 36:1). With regard to the date he comments: "Par le motif de la scène d'adoration chargée de symboles et le style de la gravure dont la technique linéaire alterne avec l'usage de la bouterolle, notre cylindre appartient à un groupe de sceaux qui peuvent être datés avec certitude vers la fin du IXe ou le début du VIIIe siècle av. J.-C..." (1967:69).

discernible. He is extending one hand toward the worshipper. There is an eight-pointed star above his horned headdress and one above bow and quiver respectively. In front of him a bareheaded worshipper is kneeling with his face turned away from the god and his hands raised in adoration. Next to him another worshipper is depicted with the typical Assyrian gestures of adoration. This figure is in a standing position and turned toward the male deity. Above the two worshippers there is a winged sundisk and a crescent. Behind the worshipper a female deity is depicted in like fashion as the male god standing also on a pedestal turned toward him.[100] She only seems to be armed with a long sword, and possibly with a quiver and a bow. She is holding a corona of pearls in her hand, while the other hand is extended in like fashion toward the male god.[101] Behind the goddess there is a horned quadruped in a crouching position seemingly suspended in midair. The scene is concluded by a *mušḫuššu* dragon (cf. Seidl, 1989:187-193) on whose back the *marru* spade[102] rests in a vertical position.[103] The dragon is similar to the one on which Ninurta is standing in **Figure 21**. There are celestial symbols (crescent, seven-star, eight-pointed star, rhombe) interspersed between the various figures.

The scene portrays a worship scene of the warrior gods Ishtar and Ninurta. We would suggest that the scene on the cylinder seal has not been divided correctly, since the dragon positioned behind the male god, forms the left border of the scene. Although the dragon has the symbol of Marduk on its back, it appears more likely that it can be identified as the characteristic animal of Ninurta who is, however, not standing on his symbol animal, but next to it. Both Assyrian deities are often depicted together.[104]Interesting are the differing postures of the two worshippers - one standing and one kneeling: the kneeling position is rarely found on similar scenes.

Our next sample is found on a cylinder seal with unknown provenance, housed in the Staatliche Münzsammlung München (**Figure 24**). It measures 25 x 13 mm and is made from a milky coloured stone not nearer identified. It belongs to a group of seals, "deren Darstellung (Beter vor verschiedenen Gottheiten) vornehmlich mit dem Kugelbohrer herausgearbeitet wird. Sie

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[100] Moortgat-Correns comments on the pedestal: "Das Podest, auf dem sie [Ishtar] steht, gibt zu erkennen, daß es sich um ihr Standbild handelt" (1988:127).

[101] Taking stance and gesture into consideration, both gods almost form a mirror image.

[102] Vollenweider incorrectly identifies the object with the "lance de Marduk" (1967:69).

[103] These objects are symbols of the Babylonian god Marduk (cf. Klingbeil, 1992b:103).

[104] "Ischtar scheint Ninurta nahe zu stehen: sie sind auf einer Anzahl Siegel gemeinsam abgebildet, beide sind Kriegsgottheiten und ihrer beider Tempel in Nimrud befinden sich in unmittelbarer Nachbarschaft..." (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:127).

Figure 24

sind des öfteren mit Legenden versehen, die in das 9./8. Jahrhundert gehören" (Moortgat-Correns, 1955:21). Although our seal has no legend, it can be dated around 800 B.C. It shows a worship scene with a bearded god standing in the middle of the composition. He is wearing the horned feathery crown which is marked by an eight-pointed star. He is dressed in identical fashion as the gods in **Figure 21** and **Figure 23**, and is holding an ax in his right hand, while his left hand is raised in the receiving or greeting gesture. A bow and quiver are attached crosswise to his back, although they are only depicted in a sketchy way. A sword is attached to his belt and the weapons are all marked with stars, designating them as divine weapons. Behind the god there is a *Mischwesen*, a scorpion man with bird legs and feet who is holding a round object, probably a palm fruit, in his raised left hand, and a bucket-type object in his right hand.[105] To the right of the god there is a worshipper with his hands raised in a gesture of adoration. In between the god and the adorant a *marru* spade is standing upright on the ground. Although the depiction is typical of the Assyrian gods Ninurta, and also Adad, the *marru* spade, symbol of the Babylonian god Marduk, leaves some doubts as to which god is meant.[106]

Figure 25

Figure 25 shows a line drawing of a chalcedony cylinder seal, measuring 25 mm in height and 12 mm in diameter. It is made in the drilling technique, but in a more schematic way of representation than the preceding examples. From comparative material it can

[105] The depiction of a priest or a *Mischwesen* with palm fruit and bucket is known from Assyrian reliefs in the Ninurta temple in Nimrud, and represents a ritual performance (cf. Moortgat-Correns, 1988:120-122, fig. 4).

[106] It is questionable if the *marru* spade was already identified with Marduk during the 9th/8th centuries B.C. as it was the case during the Neo-Babylonian and at the beginning of the Persian periods. The spade may be an indicator that the seal originated in the Babylonian sphere of influence during Neo-Assyrian times.

be dated around 800 B.C.[107] The scene shows two bearded gods in almost identical position and gesture. They are wearing the high square crown which ends in a knob, probably a reduced schematic depiction of the horned feathery crown with the star on top. The gods are wearing a long robe of which the bottom part is striped and held together by a broad belt. They are armed with a bow and quiver crosswise on the back, although the depiction is very schematic and the individual weapons are not easily differentiated.[108] It follows that the depiction of the bow and quiver has been traditionalized to such an extent that it could serve its purpose even through a very sketchy depiction. There is a sword attached to the belt pointing backwards from the figures. The right arm is raised in a greeting position, while the other hand is holding the staff of a mace or club which is in a vertical position.[109] The weapon is comparable to the club held by Adad in **Figure 22**. In front of the two gods, a bareheaded (?) and bearded worshipper is standing, having his hands raised in the adoration gestures familiar by now. The worshipper is dressed in like manner as the two warrior gods. The objects behind the gods can be readily identified as a crescent and below that the *qan tuppi* stylus of Nabû resting vertically on a pedestal.[110] The gods on the seal are difficult to identify, since their depiction is schematically reduced, and no definite attributes of certain gods are associated with the two gods. Candidates for an identification of the two warrior gods would be Ninurta and his messenger god Adad, although the presence of the symbol of Nabû is difficult to interpret, since it can hardly symbolize both gods.[111]

A Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal in the British Museum shows the warrior motif in another variation (**Figure 26**). It is a garnet seal, measuring 43 x

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[107] The seal was originally published by Ravn (1960:117f., no. 150). Cf. his dated parallels.

[108] Comments Ravn: "They [bow and quiver], therefore, seem reduced to decorative elements, cf. the rays and circles of rays frequently occurring in this Assyrian group, although they probably do originate in the picture of a bow..." (1960:117).

[109] The hand holding the weapon of the second figure is not clearly distinguishable. The weapon is comparable to the mace-staff on the stela of Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) from Zinjirli (Keel, 1972:281, fig. 407).

[110] Cf. also the similar depictions of the symbol of the moon deity Sin of Haran which is a standard with the crescent above, although crescent and standard would be to far apart here (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:339f.). For the identification of the divine symbols for Marduk and Nabû, cf. Seidl (1989:121-125).

[111] Although the cult of Nabû was widely spread during the 1st millennium B.C., the god was rarely associated with the warrior imagery, but with learning and writing as the scribe of the divine council (cf. Dalglish, 1992:1054-1056).

Figure 26

18 mm, and can be dated to the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.[112] On it a female goddess is standing on a lion or leopard[113] which she is holding on a leash. She is wearing the Assyrian horned feathery crown with the eight-pointed star above, and is dressed in a knee-long skirt and a long patterned robe. She is portrayed in full arms, whereas the details of the weapons are intricately modeled. On her back she has slung two quivers crosswise over her shoulder, and a sickle sword is hanging from the one quiver. Onto her belt a long sword is attached ending in a star. She is holding a bow and two arrows in her one hand, while the other hand is raised in a greeting gesture. Facing her, a female worshipper in a long patterned dress is standing with the familiar adoring gestures. The worshipper seems to have a sword or other staff-like weapon attached to her belt.[114] Behind the worshipper two horned caprides are raised on their hindlegs, intertwined with each other. The scene is completed by a palm tree, and an object which looks like an earring above the animals but which could be interpreted as a winged sundisk.[115] The image depicts Ishtar on the lion (as a cult image) fully armed worshipped by a female adorant. The palm tree and the intertwined caprides with emphasized phalli clearly illustrate the scene's connotation of fertility.[116]

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[112] It was published by Ward (1910:fig. 751; cf. also Weber, 1920:no. 222; Collon, 1987:166f., pl. 26:773; Winter, 1983:459, fig. 504; etc.).

[113] The attribute animal of Ishtar is a lion, although the dots on the animals body could also point to a leopard or a panther (cf. Collon, 1987:167). Even if one has to expect the lion as Ishtar's attribute animal, the iconographic description should not be guided by pre-conceived knowledge.

[114] Here the difference between divine arms and ordinary arms becomes apparent: there is no star attached to the end of the weapon.

[115] For the earring, cf. Oppenheim (1943:192, pl. 3). After checking the original, and with Mayer-Opificius we would rather suggest that we are confronted with a schematic depiction of the winged sundisk with tail (1984:222, no. 6).

[116] The palm tree in connection with caprides is a familiar iconographic motif since the Middle and Late Bronze Age, and was there associated with the "gebärfähige und nährende Segensmacht der fruchtbaren Erde" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:80; cf. also 172f.). Although this connotation experienced various changes it retained its basic closeness to the fertility cult which may be substantiated by the fact that we are dealing with a female worshipper.

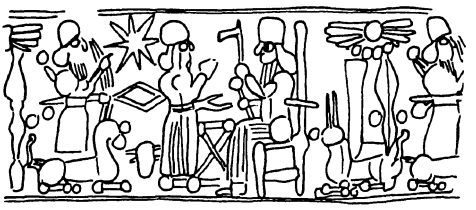

Figure 27

Our final example (**Figure 27**) of the armed god motif is found on a quartz cylinder seal with unknown provenance which has been stylistically dated between 800-700 B.C.[117] Although the seal is not worked in such detail as the preceding sample, it nevertheless presents an interesting variation to the god in arms motif. Starting from the left of the scene, there is an armed bearded god standing on a horned dragon, possibly wearing a high headdress.[118] The quivers over his shoulders are schematically depicted with the stars above them as mere globes. He is holding a bow in one hand, and a sword is attached to his belt. The space toward the next figure, an adorant, is filled with an eight-pointed star, a rhombe, and a bull's head. Between the adorant and the seated god there is a table which could be interpreted as an offering table. The bearded god is seated on a throne with a high back. He has a sword attached to his belt, and is holding a mace-scepter[119] with his one hand, while the other hand is raised holding an ax over the offering table. Behind the god there is a *mušḫuššu* with the *marru* spade and the *qan tuppi* stylus on its back, symbolizing the Babylonian deities Marduk and Nabû. Above there is a winged sundisk. Although the scene is not unfamiliar, and the armed god fits well into this motif group, the depiction of the other god holding an ax above the table as a possible sacrifice scene is less familiar.[120] Besides the symbols of Marduk and Nabû, an identification of the gods is not easily undertaken, since the depiction is schematic. As for **Figure 24** and **Figure 25**, the depiction is characteristic for Ninurta or Adad, while the seated god cannot be identified further.

The gods with warrior attributes have been represented by four motif groups: (1) the smiting god, (2) the god in archer scenes, (3) the god with the spear, and (4) the god in arms. It is interesting to note that the active warrior scenes, i.e., images on which the god is actively involved in warrior activities like smiting, shooting, thrusting, are largely limited to the end of

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[117] The seal is described rather broadly as stemming from Mesopotamia, and has been auctioned by Sotheby's (1992:fig. 211).

[118] The seal is unfortunately chipped in this place.

[119] Cf. note 109.

[120] One could, of course, question if the seated figure indeed represents a god, or rather the king. However, the clearly higher headdress and the adorant in front of him would indicate the presence of a deity.

the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age, except for the renaissance of the motif in the smiting Hercules during the end of the time period under consideration for this study. The passive warrior scenes, i.e., the god in arms motif, have been limited to the Neo-Assyrian period, while only one sample came from the Syro-Palestinian region.[121] The predominant iconographic medium for the passive warrior scenes is the cylinder seal, while the active warrior scenes were found on various image carriers.

5.2.3. Gods with God of Heaven Attributes

This second class of iconographic objects will include images displaying attributes which can be associated with the god of heaven metaphor. Again, it has to be stressed, that the selection is phenomenologically motivated, and does not endeavour to examine a certain type of ANE deity, as e.g., just the weather-god. The rather broad terminology 'god of heaven' has been chosen purposefully in order to accommodate various gods who display characteristics that fit the criteria. Thus the images will include depictions of weather- and storm-gods, probably foremost, but also gods connected to other cosmic and celestial phenomena, such as sun, moon, stars, water, wind, creative power, seraphim, etc.

5.2.3.1. The God in the Winged Sundisk

This motif group will contain depictions of the winged sundisk, whereas we have concentrated on anthropomorphic portrayals of that imagery, i.e., the god within the sundisk. Mayer-Opificius has examined the development of the winged sundisk in Mesopotamia and Syria from Old Assyrian times onward. The motif is of Egyptian origin and one of the most dominant iconographic images throughout ANE iconography. She summarizes with regard to the beginning of the anthropomorphic depiction of that motif "Nach anfänglicher stärkerer Betonung ihres 'himmlischen Aspekts' wird zu Beginn der neuassyrischen Zeit anscheinend mehr Gewicht auf die Epiphanie des Sonnengottes gelegt" (1984:207). The chronological margin of the selected objects presented here confirms this assertion.

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[121] And even there only in connection with the Assyrian administration centers: "Das erneute Auftauchen von Rollsiegeln [during the Iron Age IIC] hängt also direkt mit der Präsenz assyrischer Beamter in den palästinischen Provinzen zusammen" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:328). As Keel has repeatedly mentioned, the cataloging of Syro-Palestinian cylinder seals remains a desideratum (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:328, n. 292).

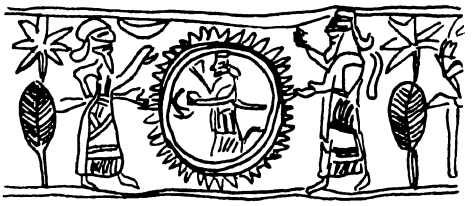

Figure 28

Figure 28 clearly shows the transformation of the sundisk motif into the epiphanous depiction of the sun-god. The scene is found on a Neo-Assyrian cylinder seal with unknown provenance dated in the 9th century B.C. which falls in the middle of the Neo-Assyrian empire.[122] The seal is made from serpentine measuring 18 x 9 mm and is housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library.[123] Depicted on it there is a nimbus in the centre of the scene. The sun-rays are clearly discernible, although there are no wings attached to it.[124] The god in the nimbus seems to be armed with a sword and possibly a bow, although the details are not altogether distinguishable. He is completely anthropomorphic, wearing a long patterned dress, although it is thinkable that his lower body is depicted as a tail, since the feet are not discernible. The nimbus is flanked by two worshippers in a gesture of adoration. They are similarly dressed as the god in the nimbus. The scene is concluded by a stylized tree and an eight-pointed star above it. There is a crescent between the adorant (to the left) and the nimbus. Although the god is depicted with weapons, we would identify him with the sun-god Šamaš and not with the god Asshur.[125] The worshippers could also be supporting the nimbus, but their gesture is the familiar one of adoration.

The depiction in **Figure 29** is found on a decorated horse trapping from Urartu (Eastern Anatolia)[126] dated to the 8th century B.C.[127] It measures 21

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[122] "Aufgrund der Forschung der letzten Jahrzehnte ist man übereingekommen, den Beginn der neu-assyrischen Zeit mit Tiglatpilesar I. anzusetzen" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:198), who reigned from 1114-1076 B.C.

[123] Published by Porada (1948:82, no. 685).

[124] Although the sundisk has no wings attached to it, we have included it under the current motif group, since the rays take over the function of the wings, symbolizing the rays of the sun.

[125] "Die Anthropomorphisierung der Sonne in der frühen neuassyrischen Zeit - vor allem die Darstellung der Flügelsonne mit dem 'bewaffneten' Gott - hat in der Wissenschaft häufig zu seiner Deutung als Assur geführt. Der 'kriegerische' Charakter dieses Gottes gilt ja allgemein als besonders typisch für ihn. Wie W. Mayer [*Untersuchungen assyrischer Militärgeschichte*] demnächst ausführen wird, dürfte diese Vorstellung falsch sein. Daß Assur wegen Kriege geführt wurden, muß keinesfalls bedeuten, daß er eine 'kriegerische Gottheit' war" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:200).

[126] The object is housed in the Tel Aviv Museum and has been published by Merhav (1987:no. 74).

[127] Merhav suggests: "In trying to date this piece, it should be pointed out that the chain of triangles (or zigzag) which here forms part of the design, decorates helmets, quivers and

Figure 29

cm in height and is made of bronze. The plaque is highly decorated with a variety of motifs[128] of which we have chosen the central ring depicting the god in the winged sundisk. Along the border there are chains of buds, triangles, and zigzag decorations. The god is depicted with his upper body emerging from the disk. He is bearded and wears a helmet-like pointed cap which ends in a globe. His right arm is raised in a blessing gesture, while his left arm is extended forward. The wings of the sundisk are horizontally attached, and the feathers are clearly distinguishable in the form of curved lines. The tail is conically shaped and is also decorated with a feather design, though not as obvious as the wings. The interesting aspect about this depiction is the two streams of water which are emanating from the sundisk diagonally downwards. Comments Mayer-Opificius: "Wichtiger noch als die neue Darstellung der Flügelsonne [i.e., with a feathery bird's tail below] - für das assyrische Gebiet zwar ein Datierungsfaktor - ist es jedoch, daß der bereits in der Mitanni-Zeit erfundene Bildgedanke des aus der Sonne strömenden Regens wieder aufgegriffen wird" (1984:198f.).[129] The streams of water symbolize fertility and purification. Since the object comes from Eastern Anatolia, it is interesting to note the universal popularity and uniformity of that motif during the Neo-Assyrian period.

An interesting variation of the theme is found on a jasper cylinder seal from the British Museum.[130] It has been dated to the 8th-7th centuries B.C. and displays Neo-Babylonian influences (**Figure 30**).[131] The scene on the seal depicts the king sitting on a throne with a back rest. His dress is highly

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other sheet metal objects dated by their inscription to Argišti I and Sarduri II (ca. 780-730 B.C.E.). This may suggest a dating of around the mid-eighth century for the plate under discussion" (1987:no. 74).

[128] The other scene shows a representation of the 'Herr der Tiere' motif: a hero is holding two bulls on their horns.

[129] Similar images will concern us below under the water-providing god motif group [5.2.3.2.]. Although they will also be in association with the sundisk, the central topic of these motifs will be the water and not the sundisk.

[130] Published by Wiseman (1958a:fig. 81).

[131] Dress and headdress of the king, and the presence of the *marru* spade point toward a Neo-Babylonian origin for this cylinder seal.

Figure 30

ornamented and there is a sword attached to his belt. His beard and hairdress is intricately modeled, and he is wearing a pointed cap with three spikes pointing upwards. In his hand he holds a drinking bowl, probably a libation bowl, since there is an offering table standing in front of him (cf. **Figure 27**). Behind the king an attendant is standing holding a fan toward the king. On the other side of the offering table another attendant is standing, waving an object over the table toward the king.[132] The interesting part of the image is seen along the border of the upper section of the scene: there is an eight-pointed star on the right, followed by the *marru* spade, the symbol of the Babylonian god Marduk, and a crescent. Above the offering table a sundisk is depicted out of which the upper body of the sun-god emerges. He is facing toward the left with his hands raised, probably holding the ring and the rod. Below the sundisk there is a bird's tail. The sundisk does not have wings and is ornamented with eight curved lines, possibly symbolizing the water sources connected elsewhere with the sundisk, although Mayer-Opificius proposes that this aspect of the winged sundisk did not penetrate significantly into Babylonian iconography (1984:206). It is interesting to observe that the anthropomorphization of the sun-god has developed so far as to omit the wings of the sundisk altogether. Next to the sun-god there is a priest dressed in the fish-dress, holding a bucket and offering a palm fruit, viz., pine cone. Mayer-Opificius comments on the distribution of the anthropomorphic sun-god motif in Babylon: "Auch der anthropomorph in der Sonnenscheibe erscheinende Gott ist deutlich eine im Norden beheimatete und in Babylonien nur selten übernommene Darstellungsform des Sonnengottes. Auf einem Siegelbild [**Figure 30**] tritt der Sonnengott am Himmel in menschlicher Gestalt mit einem Vogelschwanz, der unterhalb der ungeflügelten Sonnenscheibe sichtbar wird..." (1984:206).

[132] The object has been interpreted by Wiseman as a fly swatter, but the context of the image could indicate a ritual performance.

Figure 31

Figure 31 shows another, though less evolved, variant of the anthropomorphization of the sun-god, and is found on a stamp seal from Gezer, reflecting the presence of the motif in the Syro-Palestinian region. The conoid is made from carnelian, measuring 22,7 x 15 x 23 mm, and has been found in grave 4 dating to the Persian period (5th century B.C.). However, the Neo-Assyrian iconography of the image would identify the seal as belonging to the Iron Age IIC (720-600 B.C.).[133] The seal shows an adoration scene: on the right side a worshipper or priest is standing with his hands raised in adoration. He is wearing a round cap and an Assyrian-type dress (cf. the similar patterned dress of the worshippers in **Figure 22** which has been dated to the 9th to 8th centuries B.C.). In front of the worshipper there is a winged *Mischwesen* with a falcon head, possibly a griffin (Black and Green, 1992:99f.), above which a crescent has been inserted.[134] Both figures are standing on a double standing line which has been broken off below the *Mischwesen*, facing each other. The sundisk is positioned above the scene, consisting of a double nimbus and horizontally extended wings. A spread-out feathery tail has been added below the sundisk. The most interesting feature of the sundisk is, however, the two arms that are extended downwards from the wings, ending in three-fingered hands. Since this motif is relatively rare in Neo-Assyrian depictions of the winged sundisk motif, it may be a misunderstood or purposeful adaptation of the streams of water motif normally found on the Assyrian variations of the theme.

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[133] The seal has originally been published by Macalister (1912:293, fig. 154:14b); for the dating, cf. also Keel and Uehlinger (1992:337f., fig. 293a).

[134] These falcon-headed winged *Mischwesen* were especially popular during the Iron Age IIB (925-720/700 B.C.). Keel and Uehlinger comment on their meaning in Syro-Palestinian iconography: "Die geflügelten Mischwesen ... sind trotz der Doppelkrone bzw. der Sonnenscheibe, die sie in der Regel auf dem Kopf tragen, kaum als Verkörperungen irgendwelcher Gottheiten zu sehen. Das Attribut auf dem Kopf verleiht ihnen aber königlichen bzw. solaren Charakter. Die Mischwesen sind deshalb wohl als Wächter und Schutzmächte im Dienste eines in solaren Kategorien vorgestellten 'Höchsten Gottes' und 'Himmelsherrn' zu verstehen. Ihre Präsenz auf Privatsiegeln dürfte eine gewisse Individualisierung und 'Demokratisierung' der damit verbundenen Ideen bedeuten" (1992:289f., fig. 249-254b). The connection to the solar deity becomes explicit with the association of the *Mischwesen* with the winged sundisk on our seal. Cf. also the rising sun on a scarab from Tell el Far'ah (Tirza) dated 1650-1550 which shows a rising sun above a winged *Mischwesen*, possibly a griffin (Cornelius, 1990:30, fig. 13).

However, the solar deity, the Assyrian Šamaš, received a certain popularity in Syro-Palestine during the 8th century B.C., although solar-oriented images were on the decline (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:337f.).

There is a cylinder seal in the collection of the Biblical Institute, Fribourg (from hereafter 'BIF') which shows a further development of the winged sundisk motif (**Figure 32**). The seal measures 36,7 x 15,5 mm, and in accordance with its modeled style it has been dated to about 700 B.C. (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:45, fig. 50). The winged sundisk has fully developed into an anthropomorphic figure who is standing on the back of a horse. The horse has been associated with Šamaš (Schroer, 1987:288; Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:45), and thus the god is clearly identified as the Assyrian solar deity. The nimbus is not discernible anymore, but the feathery tail is clearly represented by the wide dress covering the upper body, worn by the god over his long patterned skirt. The god has raised his hands and is depicted facing to the right side. From the horizontally positioned wings two streams of water are flowing diagonally downwards. On top of the left wing a human head is visible, while the equivalent head on the right wing is not visible, since the seal has been chipped off in this place.[135] To the left of the wings there is an eight-pointed star, while on the right a crescent may be distinguishable. Below the wings there is a straight line which seems to serve as a platform which is carried by two bull-men.[136] The scene is flanked by two figures, a priest (genius?) in a fish-dress on the left with his right hand raised, holding a bucket with his other hand,[137] and an adorant with no

Figure 32

[135] The interpretation of these heads is not clear. Schroer mentions the following possibilities found in the relevant literature: (1) symbolizing the heavenly god; (2) depicting the Uranian Trias, whereas the wings would represent the sky and not the sun; and (3) individuals received and protected by the sun (1987:289, n. 154).

[136] The presence of the bull-men may serve as an indicator for the place of origin of the cylinder seal: "Auffallend ist das Fehlen der Stiermenschen in dem hier behandelten Kreis. Diese Mischwesen sind anscheinend nur in südlich-babylonischer oder hethitischer (!) Ikonographie dem Sonnengott zugeordnet" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:198).

[137] Comment Black and Green on the significance of the bucket and cone gesture: "Written sources on the matter are few, but it seems clear that the bucket and cone were associated with purification, for they are known respectively as *banduddû* (bucket) and, significantly, *mullilu* (purifier), and figurines of genies holding these attributes were

further specific details. Since Šamaš is standing on a pedestal on the back of the horse, we may be confronted with a cult image of the deity. The entity of the platform supported by the two bull-men communicates a certain type of world-view, i.e., that the heavens are supported by certain semi-divine beings, the atlants, and that the heavenly realm consists of more than the sun-god, i.e., rain and other heavenly symbols and figures, although it centers around the depiction of Šamaš. Furthermore, the god serves as a transitional figure between heaven and earth, since he breaks through the platform and is supported by his attribute animal.[138]

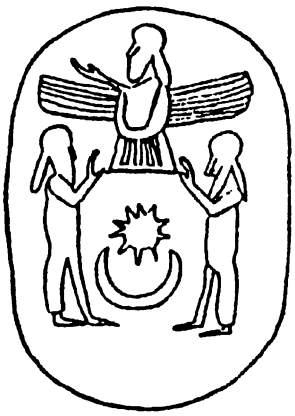

Figure 33

Our next example may serve as an indicator for the anthropomorphization of the winged sundisk (**Figure 33**). The scene is found on a stamp seal, measuring 17 x 12 mm of which the provenance is somewhat unclear.[139] The seal has been incised on both sides, while on the reverse side there is an inscription reading למנחמת אשת גדמלך 'belonging to *mnḥmt* wife of *gdmlk*' which will concern us below (**Figure 34**). The image presented on the side shown here depicts two bearded worshippers who are wearing long Assyrian-type dresses. They have raised their hands in a gesture of adoration toward the winged sundisk.[140] In

among the types placed within buildings for protection from malevolent demons and disease..." (1992:46).

[138] Comments Schroer on the meaning of the scene: "P. Calmeyer and U. Seidl [1993] haben inzwischen aufgezeigt, dass urartäische Bilder des Mannes in der Flügelsonne, der von Berggottheiten beidseitig gestützt wird, im Rahmen von Siegesdarstellungen beheimatet sind und wahrscheinlich den Sonnengott in seiner Funktion als Siegesgarant versinnbildlichen" (1987:299f.). This interpretation of the sun-god would establish a link to the warrior motif.

[139] The seal has supposedly been found by a missionary during the last century. It is now housed in the British Museum (BM 136202). Galling has published it with his inscribed name seals from Syria and Palestine (1941:151, 184, no. 82; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:338, n. 300). Note Galling's description and interpretation of the scene: "Wir sehen hier einen Ring mit Vogelschwanz und Flügeln, zwischen denen der Oberkörper des Gottes sichtbar wird. Dieser assyrische Typus findet sich ähnlich auch bei der Darstellung Ahuramazdas, und man kann daher ... fragen, ob das Siegel nicht in die persische Periode gehört" (1941:151).

[140] As a matter of fact they may be supporting the sundisk, a function which would identify them as semi-deities (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:338). The supporting figures are found from the 2nd millennium B.C. and come in a number of variations: "Schließlich wären noch einfach menschlich gebildete 'Helden' geflügelt oder ungeflügelt, mit oder ohne Hörnerkrone, zu nennen, die in allen Gebieten und Zeiten als Atlanten fungierten.... Ihre

between the adorant there is a crescent and a star. The sundisk has two horizontal broad wings, and a feathery tail of sunrays. Out of the nimbus of the disk the upper body of a bearded god is emerging. He is facing toward the left, extending his arms in a gesture of blessing. As to the identification of the scene, Keel and Uehlinger observe:

Figure 34

> Assyrische Darstellungen dieser Gestalt hat man früher gerne mit Assur, urartäische mit Ḫaldi, achämenidische mit Ahuramazda, d.h. mit dem jeweiligen obersten Staatsgott identifiziert. Diese Identifikation des Gottes in der Flügelsonne ist aber mit guten Gründen in Frage gestellt worden. Der in der assyrischen und achämenidischen Monumentalkunst stets mit dem König verbundene Gott ist doch eher als Sonnengottheit zu verstehen... (1992:338).

Thus we are confronted with a representation of Šamaš the Assyrian sun-god. Keel continues to identify the god on our seal with the Edomite Gad, since the onomasticon *gdmlk* displays this theophoric element, although the reading of the name is not unambiguous.[141] Palaeographically the seal can be dated to the 7th and early 6th centuries B.C. displaying Edomite features (cf. **Figure 34**).

Another seal housed in the BIF shows the later development of the god in the winged sundisk motif (**Figure 35**). It is a carnelian cylinder seal with unknown provenance, measuring 28,3 mm in height and 13,1 mm in diameter, and although the image is in the Neo-Assyrian tradition, it shows Achaemenid features, and can thus be dated around 500 B.C. (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:pl. 4).[142] The scene shows the upper body of a bearded god in a sundisk, whereas the nimbus is not distinguishable. The god is exhibiting Achaemenid influences, since he is wearing the

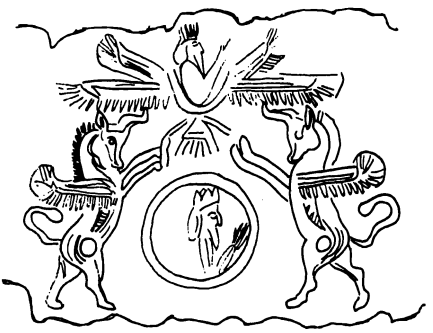

Figure 35

Rolle als reinigende Genien wird in neuassyrischer Zeit deutlich" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:198).

[141] However, Lemaire reads פדמלך instead of גדמלך which is attested among the Moabite onomastica, although he opts for an Edomite palaeographic interpretation of the inscription, since the כ at the end of line 2 is uncommon in Moabite palaeography (Lemaire, 1992:16). Note the stylized *ankh* sign at the end of the first line.

[142] The seal was originally published by Vollenweider, Bruschweiler, and Stucky (1966:157, no. 43, pl. 95e).

Persian *kidaris* crown with five points which normally was reserved for the Persian king.[143] Another departure from traditional Neo-Assyrian portrayals of the motif is the addition of two extra wings which are pointing diagonally upwards. There is also an indication of the water streams flowing from the wings. Below the sun-god, two winged bulls are standing in a position typical for the supporters of the heavenly realm, the atlants, discussed in connection with **Figure 32**. In between the winged bulls a nimbus[144] is depicted in which the chest of a similar figure as the god above in between the four wings is portrayed. Both figures are facing to the right with their hands raised in a gesture of blessing, and are wearing the Persian *kidaris*. One would normally expect an object like a sacred tree, but scarcely a repetition of the god. "Die Büste im Kreis stellt wahrscheinlich den irdischen Stellvertreter des himmlischen Königs dar" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:pl. 4). Thus we would be confronted with a close identification of king and sun-god with an allusion to the, in Achaemenid times popular, motif of the 'Herr der Tiere'. It also seems possible to identify the figure below as a second representation of the sun-god (cf. **Figure 21**). Above surrounded by wings, symbolizing the heaven, below in a nimbus taking the place of the sacred tree. However, taking the nature of Achaemenid royal iconography into consideration, it seems more likely to interpret the figures as sun-god and king in close association.

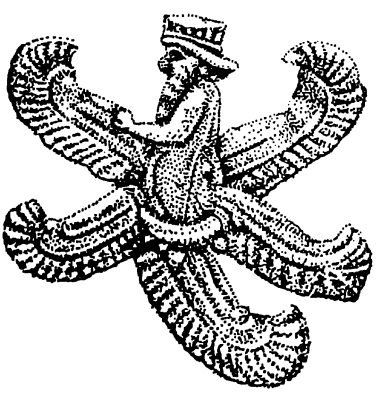

Figure 36

As a final example of the god in the winged sundisk motif, **Figure 36** may be taken. It is found on a golden metal plaque from Sardes and can be dated to the 5th century B.C. It measures 22 x 20 mm and is intricately worked.[145] The object shows a bearded god with a flat cap. He has four feathery wings. The upwardly curved tips of the wings are characteristic of Achaemenid iconography (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:433, fig. 360a-361b). Below there is a tail which in the form is almost

[143] Cf. the seal from Tell Keisan with the typical Achaemenid 'Herr der Tiere' motif on which the Persian king is depicted fighting a horned bull or griffin (Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:231f.; cf. also Klingbeil, 1992b:106).

[144] Whether the object is just a 'ring' like a frame, or a nimbus reminiscent of the sundisk, is difficult to determine.

[145] The gold plaque was originally published by Boehmer and Güterbock (1987:114, fig. 90).

identical to the four wings. The sundisk has disappeared completely, although there might be a remnant of it below the figure in the form of a half circle. It stands to question if this depiction was still identified with the sun-god, or if it designated the heavenly god Ahuramazda without specific solar connotations. Again we note the affinity in the depiction of the god to the royal iconography of the Persian period.

The development of the god with the winged sundisk has proceeded throughout the ANE[146] in terms of an increasing anthropomorphization of the god, whereas other heavenly attributes became more and more important, causing the original exclusively solar oriented iconography to shift - in instances even to disappear[147] - toward a heavenly deity closely associated with Achaemenid royal iconography, although one comes full-circle here, since the original Egyptian motif was associated with the pharaoh (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:294f.).[148]

5.2.3.2. The Water-Providing God

This motif group will include images where the iconographic emphasis is placed upon the *water-providing god*, although at times the motifs are disconnected from an anthropomorphic depiction of the water providing god. Most of the images are in contexts with the winged sundisk,[149] but it appeared advisable to assemble them into a separate motif group, since the focus is somewhat different and does not lie primarily on the solar connotation.

The scene presented in **Figure 37** is found on a lapis lazuli cylinder seal from the Thebes hoard (Greece).[150] The seal measures 41,8 x 15 mm and displays Kassite style. Although the archaeological dating is out of context, the seal bears the inscription of its owner reading "*Kirdin-Marduk, son of Sha-ilimma-damqa, the 'sha-reshi' official of Burnaburiash, king of the world* [his italics]" (Collon, 1990:34). The Kassite king Burnaburiash

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146 "Man darf es deshalb zu den überzeitlichen altorientalischen Motiven rechnen" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:190).

147 Referring e.g., to the omission of the sundisk as found here in **Figure 36**.

148 This is, of course, a generalization, since the motif experienced geographical and chronological developments which favoured individual iconographic elements, while other attributes never came to fruition in other areas.

149 We have already encountered the streams of water emanating from the sundisk (cf. **Figure 29** and **Figure 32**).

150 The hoard "was found in 1963 in Greece in a Mycenaean level. It contained gold, agate and lapis lazuli objects including thirty-six lapis lazuli cylinder seals. Many of the seals were either of Cypriote origin or had been re-cut in Cyprus. Others came from Babylonia..." (Collon, 1990:34f.).

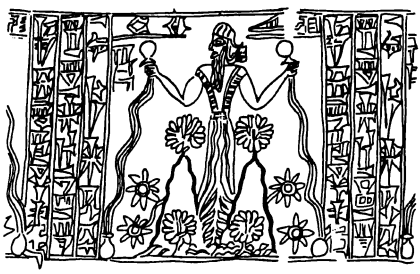

Figure 37

reigned from 1359-1333 B.C. which would locate this seal in the marginal zone of the time period under question for this study. The impression of the seal shows a bearded god facing to the left. He is wearing a flat cap, and the ornamentation on his long skirt is reminiscent of flowing water. He is positioned between two mountains on which flowers and trees are growing. The god has extended his arms to the sides and he is holding a vase in each hand from which streams of waters flow down into vases on the ground.

Taking the Middle Babylonian origin into consideration, the god has been identified as the water god Ea, while the scene depicts rain falling from heaven and the resulting fertility of the earth. Interestingly, there is no association of the rain with the winged sundisk or other common celestial symbols whatsoever. Comments Mayer-Opificius: "Himmelsdarstellungen bisher üblicher Art, symbolisiert durch den Halbmond oder die 'Sonne-Mond'-Kombination, findet man in mittelbabylonischer Zeit ebensowenig wie die Darstellung der Flügelsonne" (1984:203). The seal shows that the world-view, viz., the view of celestial phenomena, differed significantly within the ANE, since in Babylonia the mountain- or water-god was responsible for the rainfall,[151] and not the winged sundisk as in northern Mesopotamia and Syria.[152] Geographical factors like topography or climate might have contributed to these differences.

An interesting constellation of the winged sundisk alongside the streams of water can be seen in **Figure 38**. It stems from a chalcedony cylinder seal of unknown provenance, housed in the British Museum, measuring 26,5 x 15

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[151] Although the name of the seal-owner incorporates the theophoric element Marduk we would nevertheless follow Mayer-Opificius in her identification of the god as Ea, since from a methodological perspective, inscription and image should not be parallel (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:390). With regard to **Figure 37** Mayer-Opificius comments: "In mesopotamischer Tradition stehen dagegen die verhältnismäßig oft auftretenden Berg- und Quellgötter mit wassersprudelnden Aryballoi. Eine vermutlich im kassitischen Heimatgebiet verehrte Gottheit dürfte hier mit dem Süßwasserquellgott Ea in Verbindung gebracht worden sein, d.h. vermutlich zu seinen 'Trabanten' gezählt worden sein" (1984:204; cf. n. 84 for the identification of the god as Ea over against Marduk).

[152] And Syro-Palestine to some extent (cf. the specimen of the winged sundisk motif group from Syro-Palestine).

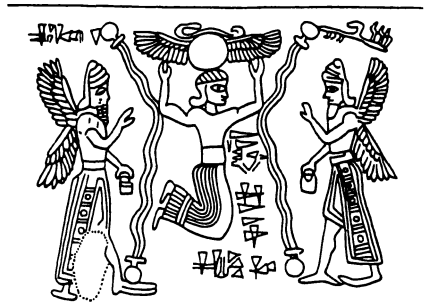

Figure 38

mm.[153] The style is Neo-Assyrian and it can be dated to the 9th century B.C. (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:206). The center of the scene is taken by a winged sundisk with feathered wings. The sundisk is supported by a kneeling male figure. The figure is wearing a striped cap and a patterned long skirt, while no further attributes helpful in the identification of the figure can be detected.[154] On the left and right sides of the winged sundisk two vases are pouring streams of water down into vases on the bottom of the scene. There are two winged male figures to the right and left borders of the image facing toward the center, holding a bucket in one hand, while the other hand could be presenting the palm fruit, viz., the cone. An inscription seems to have been subsequently added reading '(belonging) to Nabu-nasir, son of Amel-resh-Adad'. Since the inscription does not seem to be original, the theophoric elements contained in it cannot be adduced for the interpretation of the scene. The interesting part about the image which shows the natural phenomena of sun and rainfall in the context of a worship scene, is that the streams of water are depicted alongside the sundisk, while there is no immediate link between the two, except for their celestial position.[155] The whole image is not associated with an anthropomorphically portrayed god as in **Figure 37**.

[153] The cylinder seal was presumably found in Iraq and published by Wiseman (1958:pl. 69; cf. also Collon, 1987:183, pl. 29:866; Brentjes, 1983:156).

[154] The figure supporting the winged sundisk appears to reflect Assyrian influence, while it takes the place of the sacred tree, the scorpion-man, or other mythical figures. "Aber auch andere göttliche Wesen, die zu dem Kreis um Ea und Adad gehören, können als Himmelsträger auftreten" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:198).

[155] Mayer-Opificius observes with regard to the seal: "Daß der im Norden nun häufig auftretende Bildgedanke der regenspendenden Flügelsonne in Babylonien niemals heimisch geworden ist, kann man an einem neubabylonischen Siegel des 9. Jahrhunderts erkennen **[Figure 38]**.... Das assyrische Vorbild ist nach babylonischen Vorstellungen umgeformt worden: Aryballoi, die n e b e n den Flügeln der Sonne abgebildet sind, fungieren als Wasserspender" (1984:206).

Figure 39

While on former depictions of the water motif, the rain was coming down from the celestial realm, in **Figure 39** it is flowing from vases positioned on the ground. The scene is found on a carnelian cylinder seal with unknown provenance, measuring 22 x 10 mm. The style is Neo-Assyrian and the seal can thus be dated to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.[156] The scene is flanked by two priests/worshippers wearing the fish dress,[157] holding the bucket and offering the palm fruit, although they could also support the sundisk, since there is no object discernible in their raised hands. In the centre a bearded male figure is standing, supporting the winged sundisk above. His head is portrayed unproportionally big and he is wearing earrings or curls and a long patterned dress. He is depicted in similar fashion as the male in **Figure 7** on which he is found in a completely different context, i.e., the smiting god motif. Comments Mayer-Opificius concerning his identification:

> Erst im zweiten Jahrtausend tritt in der mittelassyrischen Glyptik der sechslockige Held - Laḫmu - als Atlant auf. Die Verbindung zur Flügelsonne wird in diesen Falle vielleicht durch seine Zugehörigkeit zu Ea zu erklären sein. Ea wird im babylonischen Raum nicht nur mit Süßwasserquellen, sondern auch mit Regen in Zusammenhang gebracht.... Wie bereits behandelt, ist seit mitannischer Zeit Flügelsonne und Regen eine verständliche Kombination - auf diese Weise könnte man den sechslockigen Helden als Atlanten des Himmels - symbolisiert durch die Flügelsonne - erklären. Diese Vorstellung müßte dann auf babylonischen Einfluß in Assyrien zurückgehen (1984:197f.).

Another example of the flowing water motif is shown on a cylinder seal from Assur, also dating to the 9th/8th centuries B.C. (**Figure 40**). It is made from chalcedony and measures 49 x 17 mm.[158] The upper and lower border of the seal is constituted by streams of water. On the right side of the scene

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[156] The seal was published by Eisen (1940:52, no. 87, pl. 10:87).

[157] Figures wearing the fish dress have been interpreted as priests. Comment Black and Green: "The presence of the type at doorways in Assyrian palace and temple sculpture, however, demonstrates the magically protective nature of the figure. So does the discoveries of figurines of the creature buried under the floors of buildings. Texts concerning the rituals for making such images and placing them about the house identify the type as a form of *apkallu* 'sage'. ... Though perhaps sometimes imitated by priests, the being must in essence be a supernatural creature, and antediluvian sage whose traditions are reflected in the myths of the Seven Sages" (1992:83).

[158] The seal has been found in Assur, but unfortunately the archaeological background is not very illuminating as to the precise date of the object (Moortgat, 1940:69, no. 638, pl. 76:638).

a priest wearing the fish-dress can be seen, in the usual ritual posture (see above). The right side is occupied by another worshipper wearing a long patterned dress. A winged sundisk is supported by a bearded male figure in a running position wearing a patterned dress. While the water and sun are completely detached from each other, the running atlant probably symbolizes the rapid daily progression of the sun through the sky (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:199). The water encloses the scene covering both the celestial and terrestrial realm.

Figure 40

There is a statue in the Pierpont Morgan Library which demonstrates the present motif group apart from the domain of miniature art. The object has been found in Khorsabad and from its archaeological context it can with a degree of certainty be dated to 722-705 B.C. (**Figure 41**).[159] The style is Neo-Assyrian and depicts a male figure standing on a pedestal. The head also ends in some kind of a platform which indicates that the statue was used for the support of another object.[160] The figure is wearing a long beard and a long dress from which his toes are protruding. The dress is held together by a broad belt. He can be identified as a god, since he is wearing the double horned crown normally associated with Neo-Assyrian deities on his head. The god is holding a vase with both hands in front of him which is slightly tipped to one side, allowing the water to flow out from it. The water runs into a stream flowing down on his dress. Similar streams are depicted in vertical curved lines running over the front and the back of the figure's garment. The god can be readily identified with the water- and rain-providing god Ea who is bestowing rain on the earth. No celestial or solar connotations are discernible which is also due to the limited potential of a statue to communicate iconographic contexts.

Figure 41

[159] The statue was published by Ward (1910:fig. 662a/b; cf. also Loud and Altmann, 1938:pl. 47:5).

[160] Unfortunately, we have not been able to determine the measurements of the statue.

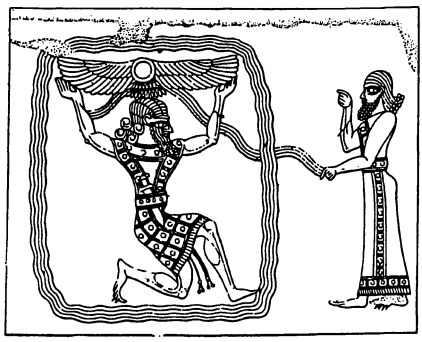

Figure 42

As a final example of the water-providing god motif group, **Figure 42** may be taken. It is found on a cylinder seal with unknown provenance which, however, display Neo-Babylonian influences (e.g., the dress of the figures), and can thus be dated to the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.[161] It combines to some extent the Assyrian and Babylonian influences discussed above. A bearded figure is in a running position. He is wearing an intricately patterned, knee-long dress with a dagger in his belt. His hairdress consists of six curls, and he is supporting a winged sundisk above his head with both hands. From the feathered wings of the sundisk, streams of water are emanating, while the stream to the right is flowing toward the hand of an adorant who is facing the atlant. The worshipper is wearing a long patterned dressed, and has his one hand raised in a gesture of adoration, while his other hand is receiving the water. Around the atlant and the winged sundisk streams of waters are depicted which surround the motif in a rectangular shape: "Diese Form des Wasserstroms erinnert an ältere 'apsû-Darstellungen' im babylonischen Gebiet.... Auch dort wird eine gedankliche Verbindung zwischen Süßwasserquellen und Regen hergestellt, die in Assyrien im Allgemeinen fremd ist" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:199). With regard to the identification of the figure in a running position, the hairdress would point toward the fact that we are confronted with a Neo-Babylonian representation of Laḫmu who is supporting the heavenly realm symbolized by the winged sundisk.

The water-providing god motif group has illustrated the various world-views which were in existence during the time period under consideration for our study.[162] Although the idea of the water-providing god is often

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[161] The seal was originally published by Layard (1847:pl. 31:7; cf. Ward, 1910:no. 656; and Frankfort, 1939:219, fig. 67).

[162] One has to exercise a certain degree of caution in the usage of the terminology. While the people of the ANE have not explicitly laid out their cosmology (*Weltbild*) in terms of a naturalistic depiction, they nevertheless worked with certain, often mythologically oriented, assumptions of how their world functioned, which at times become transparent in iconographic sources (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:11-15). With regard to the biblical world view, Houtman proposes that the OT did not know an explicit cosmology (*Weltbild*) in the form of "eine allgemein akzeptierte, systematisch aufgebaute Theorie über das Entstehen, den Aufbau und die Ausstattung des den Menschen umgebenden Kosmos in allen seinen Teilen" (1993:283), but that there existed a world-view

associated with an anthropomorphized deity (**Figure 37** and **Figure 41**), in other instances the natural phenomena of the rain and water-sources have been completely separated from a personalized religious concept, although semi-divine creatures which often serve as placeholders for the respective divinities are normally present. Finally, one has to mention the divergences between the Assyrian and Babylonian depictions of the motif which have been aptly discussed by Mayer-Opificius and to which our material is by and large limited. The fact that the water-providing god motif does not occur in the Syro-Palestinian context in a similar fashion during the time period under consideration,[163] viz., in our selection of images, should, however, be taken into consideration with due caution.

5.2.3.3. The Sacred Palm Tree

The motif of the sacred tree has to be seen in close relation with the preceding water and rain motifs, illustrating the affinity between water and fertility, although the imagery also occurs outside the context of water (cf. below).

Figure 43 depicts a scene found on a limestone cylinder without known provenance, measuring 68 x 18 mm. The style is Assyrian, and the seal has been dated to the Iron Age I, ca. 1250-1000 B.C. In the center of the image a palm tree is standing in a vase on top of a stylized mountain. Above the tree there is a winged sundisk with extended hands from which streams of water flow down on both sides of the tree into vases on the ground. On the right hand of the tree a worshipper is standing, possibly the Babylonian king.[164] He is wearing a beard, a cap, and a long dress, and has his hands raised in a gesture of adoration. On the other side the tree is flanked by a priest wearing the fish-dress, carrying a bucket and (possibly) a palm fruit in his hands. The image is ornamented on the upper and lower border with two intertwined curved lines

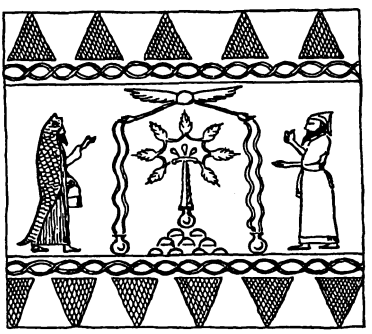

Figure 43

(*Weltanschauung*), a certain perception of the world which centers around the cosmological activities of Yahweh which are discernible behind all natural phenomena (Houtman, 1993:299-317).

[163] I.e., except for the occurrences of the winged sundisk with water streams emanating from its wings discussed above.

[164] The seal has been published by von der Osten (1934:61, no. 416, pl. 28:416; cf. Frankfort, 1939:213, fig. 65).

and five hatched triangles. These ornaments clearly represent flowing water and mountains, the characteristics of Ea, the Babylonian mountain-god and water-god.[165]

That the sacred palm tree enjoyed special attention throughout the Neo-Assyrian period, is shown by **Figure 44**, a cylinder seal from the 9th/8th centuries B.C., made from yellow marble, measuring 37 x 14 mm.[166] It represents a similar depiction of the motif as found on the preceding example. The sacred palm tree is at the center of the scene, although its depiction is more schematic and only the large leaves allow for a positive identification of it as a palm tree.[167] Above the tree there is a winged sundisk with a feathered tail which clearly shows its affinity to the depiction of sun rays. From the sundisk two streams of water are coming forth, flowing downwards along the sides of the sacred tree. Two bearded worshippers wearing long dresses are flanking the tree and the streams of water. While their one hand is raised in adoration, their other hand is grasping the stream of water. This gesture is significant, since it shifts the focus for the worshippers as passive adorants toward active participants in the action. Behind the worshipper on the left side, two plants on long stems are visible, possibly ears of corn, indicating the fertility connotation of the scene. The combination of sacred tree and winged sundisk have cosmological connotation, symbolizing the ordered world. Comments Keel with regard to a similar depiction: "Die geflügelte Scheibe und der stark stilisierte Baum stellen die geordnete Welt dar, die als Lebensbereich aus Himmel und Erde besteht" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:45, fig.

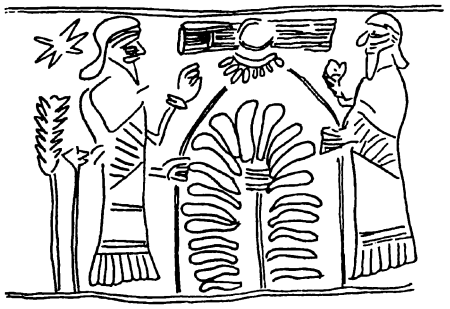

Figure 44

[165] The motif of the sacred palm tree surrounded by water may have had a climatic origin: "Diesem Bild liegt gewiß ein tatsächlich praktizierter Vorgang zugrunde. Es ist anzunehmen, daß u.a. die Palme als Vorbild für natürliche und künstliche Formen des Sakralbaumes diente. Bekannt is [sic] es, daß die Palme unter günstigen Bedingungen - wie z.B. im Sumpfgebiet des südlichen Mesopotamien - ohne Pflege wachsen kann. Schon ein wenig weiter im Norden, z.B. in Uruk, aber gedeiht sie nur in bewässerten Gärten. Diese bedurften einer intensiven Bearbeitung. Der vielfältige Nutzen, den die Palme für die Bewohner des südlichen Zweistromlandes hatte, machte es verständlich, daß vor allem sie zum 'Sakralbaum' wurde" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:205).

[166] The seal has been published by Porada (1948:77, no. 644) and is housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

[167] We will see below that the portrayal of the palm tree becomes even more schematized.

51).[168]

Another interesting aspect of the sacred tree motif is found on a jasper cylinder seal housed in the BIF, measuring 45 x 17,6 mm (**Figure 45**).[169] Stylistically, the seal can be dated between 850-800 B.C. and is of Neo-Assyrian origin. The seal is incised with the name and position of its owner, reading '(belonging) to Minu-epush-ana-ili, officer of grain storage' (Collon, 1987:77). In the middle of the scene the sacred palm tree is depicted. It is profusely ornamented, and rests on a stylized mountain. Above the tree a winged sundisk with a feathered tail is depicted, in which the upper body of the sun-god is visible, facing to the left. From the wings two streams of water are flowing downwards into vases. In similar fashion to **Figure 44** two worshippers are flanking the tree, the winged sundisk, and the water, while they are grasping the streams of water.[170] Above the worshippers, a crescent and seven-star are visible. Behind the worshipper on the right side, a female figure is standing on a pedestal which can readily be identified as the Assyrian Ishtar. She is wearing the horned crown, and is dressed in the typical knee-long skirt with a long overcoat. The goddess is fully armed with bow and quiver on her back, and a sword attached to her belt. In her one hand she is holding a ring of pearls, while the other hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. Above her head the eight-pointed star, her celestial symbol, can be seen. While the combination of sacred palm tree and winged sundisk with streams of water denote the totality of the inhabitable world (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:pl. 2), the connection to the astral deity enhances the spectrum of contexts for this motif. Ishtar, although depicted in full armor, is linked to the idea of fertility through the sacred tree, an idea which seems to go back to the Middle and Late Bronze Age

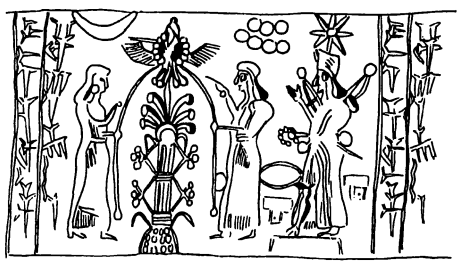

Figure 45

[168] With regard to the origin of the motif, we have discussed its original Babylonian setting in connection with **Figure 43**: "Der vom Wasser umflossene Baum dagegen ist gewiß - wie bereits ausgeführt - ein babylonischer Bildgedanke, der im 9. Jahrhundert in Assyrien übernommen wurde" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:205).

[169] The seal has been published by Collon (1987:77, no. 345; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:pl. 2).

[170] Since the gesture of grasping streams of water appears to be somewhat obscure, one wonders, if the scene does not represent a certain ritual, while the streams of water have been replaced by a tangible object, e.g., the streamers.

Figure 46

during which a naked goddess which was normally identified as 'Asherah, was depicted in close association with the sacred tree (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:29-34, 62f.). The war-like Ishtar has replaced the naked goddess ('Asherah), and a combination of warrior and god of heaven attributes can be observed.

A representation of the sacred tree motif found in Syro-Palestine, although with unknown provenance,[171] can be seen in **Figure 46**. The impression stems from scaraboid which is inscribed with Hebrew letters on the reverse, reading לחלקיהו בן פדי '(belonging) to Ḥilqiyahu, son of Pady'. The seal measures 17,5 x 16,5 x 9,2 mm and is made from limestone.[172] Lemaire classifies the seal as Judean and dates it palaeographically to the end of the 8th or the 7th centuries B.C. The scene is relatively clear and shows a stylized palm tree in the center which is flanked by two adorants. Both worshippers are presumably male, and are wearing knee-long patterned dresses and a flat hat. They seem to be holding onto the tree, while they are dancing around it: "... ils sont tournés vers un arbre stylisé vers lequel ils tendent les bras" (Lemaire, 1986:311). Comment Keel and Uehlinger on the significance of the stylized tree in Syro-Palestine during the Iron Age IIB:

> Der stilisierte Baum als numinoses Machtsymbol, das von den Mischwesen bewacht bzw. beschützt wird ..., symbolisiert mythologisch den Gottesgarten, konkret den Tempel- und Palastbereich, abstrakter den geordneten irdischen Kosmos und das durch diese Ordnung ermöglichte Leben. Er erfüllt hier nicht mehr die eher 'weiblichen', ursprünglich von der Göttin wahrgenommenen Funktionen des Nährens und der Lebensvermittlung, sondern ist in den Dienst eines - im Bild selbst nicht dargestellten - königlichen Gottes genommen und repräsentiert dessen umfassende Segensmacht (1992:265f.).

It is, however, difficult to determine, how and when an iconographic motif like the sacred tree is turned into a *numinoses Machtsymbol* [numinous symbol of power], and if it can be easily dissociated from its original context of fertility, its affiliation with the goddess 'Asherah, and finally be transferred to a divine king which would be found in Yahweh. In our view, this would require such an amount of religiously motivated transferal which

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[171] For depictions of the sacred tree motif with known provenance from Syro-Palestine during the Iron Age IIA, cf. Keel and Uehlinger (1992:170-174, figs. 179a-181).

[172] The seal was published by Lemaire (1986:310f., fig. 4a-b; cf. also Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:266, fig. 233b).

cannot be substantiated by the dichotic relationship between Yahweh and 'Asherah as related in the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, the relationship between Yahweh and 'Asherah as found in iconographic and literary extra-biblical sources, is far from explicit.[173] Nevertheless, the separation of the symbol from its associated deity has been noticed before and is in line with the increasing de-anthropomorphization of deities observed during the Iron Ages in Syro-Palestine.

As a final representation of the sacred tree motif, a cylinder seal from Nimrud will be taken (**Figure 47**). It is made from serpentine, measuring 27 mm in height,[174] and was found in the Fort Shalmaneser (S. E. courtyard). Archaeologically it can be dated to the 7th century B.C. The scene shows a greatly schematized palm tree in the center with a winged sundisk above it from which two streams of water are emanating and flowing into vases suspended in midair.[175] To the right side of the sacred tree a bearded worshipper is standing, wearing a long patterned dress. He has his hands raised in a gesture of adoration toward the winged sundisk. Above him there is a crescent and a seven-star, while in front of him a wedge-like object is standing upright which could be identified as the *qan tuppi* stylus, the symbol of the Babylonian Nabû. To the left of the scene a horned capride is raised on its hind legs toward another tree which is depicted in a more naturalistic way, but cannot be understood to be a second representation of the sacred palm tree. Again, no anthropomorphic deities are depicted, and the sacred tree - winged sundisk combination may stand for the

Figure 47

[173] Cf. the discussion on the relationship between image and inscription found at Kuntillet 'Ajrud: "Als *Fazit* [their italics] läßt sich festhalten, daß die Befunde von Kuntilet 'Aǧrud (und Ḫirbet el-Qom) keine zwingenden Argumente gegen die These einer weitgehend monolatrischen Verehrung Jahwes im Israel der EZ II B, wohl aber Argumente *gegen* [their italics] die Annahme einer weiblichen Paredros Jahwes in dieser Zeit liefern" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:282).

[174] Unfortunately, no diameter is given. The seal has been published by Parker (1962:35, pl. 18:1).

[175] Comments Parker: "I know of no parallel for the mound, which suggests a copy of the artificial tree, misunderstood" (1962:35). However, the style of the seal appears to necessitate a high degree of craftsmanship that one can expect that the seal-cutter was aware of what he was doing. Similar reduced representations of the sacred tree can be found elsewhere (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:45, fig. 51; Collon, 1987:79, fig. 355).

water-god Ea, while the capride raised against the second tree might represent a female goddess of the Ishtar- or 'Asherah-type (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:243-245, fig. 222a-c).
The sacred tree motif has been presented especially from the perspective of its affinity to the winged sundisk in combination with water and rain depictions. From a relatively clear portrayal of a palm tree, there have also been very schematized representations of the motif. It appears that the sacred tree motif took the place of a deity, and thus must be understood as a representation of that god/dess. While the affinity to the Assyrian and Babylonian Ea and Ishtar has been observed, the Syro-Palestinian version of the motif seems to have been symbolic of 'Asherah, while fertility, but also cosmological order, is the predominant theme of this constellation.[176]

5.2.3.4. The Goddess in the Star Nimbus

A recurring motif group displaying attributes of the god of heaven metaphor is the depiction of the goddess in the star nimbus. Again, the specimens are largely restricted to the Neo-Assyrian period and the goddess can usually be identified as Ishtar.
The first example of this motif group is found on a cylinder seal with unknown provenance, made from carnelian and measuring 39 x 18 mm (**Figure 48**). Stylistically it can be dated to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C..[177] The scene is complex and shows two gods standing on animals with a worshipper facing them. The worshipper is standing and has his hands raised in adoration.[178] The male god in the center of the image is standing on a horned dragon, possibly the *mušḫuššu* dragon, since the god is holding a double stylus, the *qan tuppi* stylus which would identify him as the Babylonian Nabû. He is dressed in the usual garment of Neo-Assyrian or Babylonian deities, i.e., long dress and crown with star on top. Behind him a goddess is standing on a similar

Figure 48

[176] Cf. for the development of the original Syrian iconographic motif, Keel, Keel-Leu, and Schroer, 1989:89-207).

[177] Original publication: Porada (1947:62, no. 81).

[178] Porada's interpretation of this gesture is interesting to note: "Greek soldiers of Alexander who saw it [the gesture of adoration] on a stela in Asia Minor interpreted it as snapping of the fingers. It is quite possible that the worshipper did intend to attract notice by means of the snapping sound" (1947:62).

creature, although the *Mischwesen* has wings and the horns are pointing forwards and not upwards. The goddess is wearing a knee-long skirt with a long robe above it, and the horned crown on her head, topped with a star. The goddess has raised her one hand, holding a star on a small standard. She is surrounded by a nimbus of stars, circling around the center of her body. The nimbus consists of an outer corona of distinguishable stars and an inner corona of globes, presumably representing stars as well. In the sky, in front of each god, there are two more nimbuses with unidentifiable gods in them, although they should be considered as sundisks, since there are rays emanating from them. Above the worshipper a seven-star can be seen.
Ishtar and (presumably) Nabû are portrayed in a scene of worship, each standing on his/her attribute animal. The nimbus of stars identifies the goddess as Ishtar who, in Assyrian and Babylonian times, was associated with nocturnal celestial phenomena. Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Die priviligierte Verbindung Ischtars mit den Sternen wird durch das Motiv der Göttin *im Strahlenkranz* [their italics] bzw. Sternennimbus besonders unterstrichen" (1992: 334).
The goddess Ishtar in a similar position is found on another cylinder seal with unknown provenance which is made from chalcedony, measuring 33 x 16 mm (**Figure 49**). The extensive use of the drilling technique would date the seal to the same period as the preceding sample, i.e., the 9th/8th century B.C. The cylinder seal bears an inscription which refers to the name of the seal-owner, reading *šá* ^{I}*ka-bi-li-'* '(belonging) to Kabili'. The centre of the scene depicts Ishtar in the star nimbus.[179] She is wearing a high crown topped with a globe, and is armed with a sword attached to her belt. Her hands are raised in a gesture of blessing. Although she is not standing on her animal, a capride is lying on the ground in front of her.[180] A worshipper is facing her in the normal gesture of adoration. Behind the goddess there is a scorpion-man holding up a winged sundisk, although he could also receive the water streams emanating from the wings of the sundisk. The sundisk is depicted in

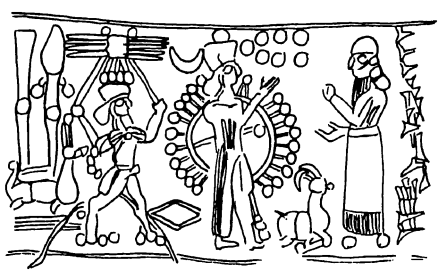

Figure 49

[179] Note that the stars are portrayed as a corona of globes. The drilling technique simplifies the details of the image from stars to globes.

[180] While one would normally expect the lion as the attribute animal of Ishtar, she also appears in connection with other animals or without an animal altogether.

a very schematic way. Behind the scorpion-man, a *mušḫuššu* dragon is crouching on a pedestal, having the symbols of Marduk and Nabû resting on its back. Interspersed between the various figures and elements, there are celestial and other divine symbols: seven-star, crescent, and rhombe. The depiction is typical for the portrayals of Ishtar, although she is found in combination with solar iconography, i.e., the sundisk which, however, has been observed before (cf. **Figure 26**).

The following four examples of the goddess in star nimbus motif group are of special interest, since they all have been found on Syro-Palestinian sites, and can be archaeologically dated, although none of them have been located in unambiguous strata, the objects being mostly surface finds.

Figure 50 shows a scene found on a cylinder seal from Shechem. The object stems from the debris above the temple at Tell Balata, unfortunately preventing a reliable archaeological dating, but the style would point to a date in the 8th century B.C.[181] It is made from syenite and modeled in the Neo-Assyrian linear style.[182] To the right of the scene, Ishtar is standing surrounded by a star nimbus which is designed from two half circles, whereas the stars are attached to the outer circle.[183] The goddess is wearing the feathered high crown and a long patterned dress. She has raised her hands in a gesture of blessing. Behind her there is an ornamented *marru* spade standing upright,[184] above which Ishtar's eight-pointed star is suspended. On the left of the image a male bearded figure is standing. He is wearing a patterned long dress and a cap, and has his one hand raised in a gesture of adoration. Behind him there is a long vertical line which almost appears to be part of the garment, perhaps a cape. The figure can generally be identified as a worshipper, maybe as a representation of the king before Ishtar.[185] The object

Figure 50

[181] The seal is housed in the Palestine Museum, Jerusalem, and was published by Parker (1949:7, pl. 1:6; cf. also Winter, 1983:458, fig. 500; Schroer, 1987:276, fig. 97 [less clear drawing]; Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:333f., fig. 287).

[182] Unfortunately, no measurements are given.

[183] The depiction of the stars is somewhat schematized, they are mounted on short pins, but can be identified as stars from comparative material (see below).

[184] Parker described the *marru* spade as "a lance with streamers" (1949:7).

[185] Keel and Uehlinger have identified the figure as the Assyrian king, but the image is too schematized to allow for such an identification.

in between the adorant and the goddess can be recognized as a Babylonian fire altar or incense burner on which the worshipper is probably offering incense, since the flames are stylized above the altar.[186] Between the altar and the goddess an object is lying on the ground which cannot be identified. Above the altar a seven-star can be seen.[187]

A similar scene is found on an agate stamp seal from Dor (**Figure 51**). Although it has been found in a Late Roman stratum, the object is clearly out of its archaeological context and should rather be dated to the 8th or 7th centuries B.C.[188] The style is linear Neo-Assyrian, and the scene shows Ishtar in a star nimbus, standing on a double line. The stars are in similar fashion to **Figure 50** depicted in a schematic way through globes mounted on pins which are attached to the nimbus. Ishtar appears to be wearing a long dress and the high crown which we have already encountered numerous times. Above the scene there is a crescent. A worshipper is standing facing the goddess. From the photograph it appears that the figure is female. She is also wearing a long dress, and has raised her hands in a gesture of adoration. On her hands she is holding a flat object, offering it to the goddess. In all probability we could be confronted with a woman offering an ash cake or a bread to Ishtar: "Das Räuchern auf den Dächern, Trankopferspenden sowie das Darbringen von Broten oder Kuchen war gerade auch im assyrischen Kult von Adad und Ischtar populär..." (Winter, 1983:565).

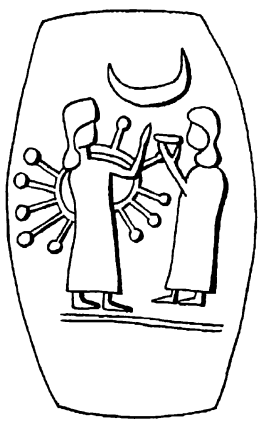

Figure 51

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[186] Besides the apparent function in the ritual of burning incense before a god/dess, the fire altar is also symbolizing the Babylonian fire god Nušku (Klingbeil, 1992b:111).

[187] Comments Winter on the seven-star: "Die sieben Punkte hatten ursprünglich eine andere, nicht mit Sicherheit zu bestimmende Bedeutung (7 Lossteine, Götter von 7 Städten, vielleicht aber auch ein Zusammenhang mit der 7-blättrigen Rosette der Inanna/Ischtar.... Eindeutig als Gestirn (Plejaden) sind sie erst in der Kerkuk-Glyptik belegt.... In neuassyrischer Zeit wurde ein Dämonengruppe (Sebettu) damit identifiziert..." (1983:459, n. 1294).

[188] The seal is found in the Archaeological Institute of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and was published by Stern (1992:68, fig. 85; cf. also Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:334, fig. 288c).

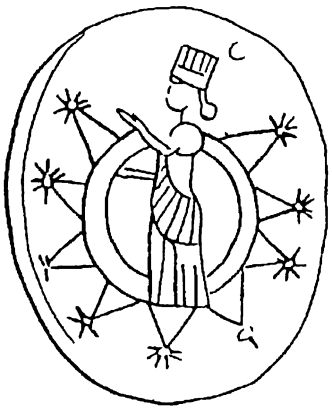

Figure 52

Following along the same iconographic tradition, another Syro-Palestinian stamp seal depicts Ishtar on her own without the context of an adoration scene (**Figure 52**). The scene is found on the base of an ovoid stamp seal, measuring 17,1 x 14 x 7,6 mm, a surface find from Ashdod, and has been dated to the 7th century B.C.[189] The goddess is portrayed facing toward the left, wearing the high feathered crown, and a patterned long dress. The knee-long skirt with the long dress over it, as found in **Figure 48** and **Figure 49**, does not seem to have been a feature of Syro-Palestinian depictions of the motif, since the goddess is always dressed with the long patterned skirt. On this seal she also has her one hand raised in a gesture of blessing, and is surrounded by a double nimbus with the stars attached to the outer circle.[190] It is interesting that Ishtar is depicted on her own which demonstrates her importance in Syro-Palestinian glyptic during the Neo-Assyrian time period: "Ischtar ist die einzige unter den assyrischen Göttern, die im Palästina der EZ II C auch auf Stempelsiegeln in anthropomorpher Gestalt erscheint. Dies scheint auf den ersten Blick für eine größere Bekanntheit bzw. Breitenwirkung der Göttin zu sprechen" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:334).

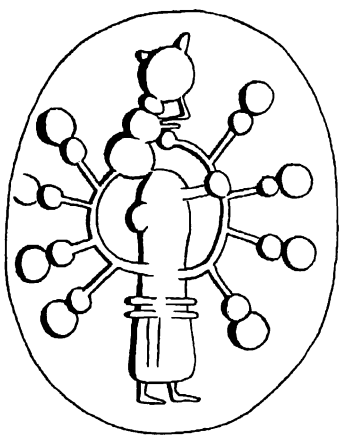

Figure 53

As a final example of Ishtar in the star nimbus, the stylistically different but otherwise almost identical depiction of the goddess found on a scaraboid from Bet Shean may be taken (**Figure 53**). It is a surface find, made from limestone, measuring 22,5 x 18 x 10,7 mm.[191] The scene has been worked in the Neo-

[189] The seal is unpublished from the Clark Collection (no. 212), YMCA Jerusalem (cf. Schroer, 1987:276).

[190] The stars are, however, not presented as mounted on pins, but rather on the furthest points of triangles connected to the outer nimbus.

[191] Published by Keel and Uehlinger (1992:334, fig. 288b). The seal is housed in the collection of M. Reschef, Kibbutz Bet-Alfa, Israel.

Babylonian drilling technique, rendering the motif in a rather schematic way. Thus the corresponding dating would assign the seal to the 7th or 6th centuries B.C., making it the latest specimen of this motif group.[192] This depiction follows the previous one closely, except for the manufacturing technique. The goddess is facing to the right, raising one arm in the familiar gesture. The headdress is probably a high crown with horns, as the two small globes on top of the crown would indicate. Her hairstyle is clearly modeled, and she is wearing a long dress with ornamentation. She is surrounded by a single nimbus to which eight stars are attached which confirms the identification of the familiar motif of the eight-pointed star with that celestial goddess.[193]

The goddess in star nimbus motif was a popular image during Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian times, and the frequency of the motif in Syro-Palestine demonstrates its usage in that region, although the depiction is not completely in line with the specimens coming from other parts of the Neo-Assyrian empire, viz., those without a known provenance as the different dress shows. The motif is normally part of a worship scene, whereas the limited space on stamp seals reduced it to a mere depiction of the goddess alone. The emphasis is always on the celestial phenomena, i.e., the stars which are accompanying the goddess, and her identification with the Assyrian Ishtar is clearly demonstrable, as the images with the eight-starred nimbus show.[194]

Ishtar has repeatedly been associated with the מלכת השמים from Jer 7:18 and 44:19 (Winter, 1983:564-566; Schroer, 1987:273-276), whereas the characteristics of the cult, i.e., the baking of cakes or the burning of incense, would perfectly fit the Assyrian goddess who commands epithets like *šarrat šamê* 'queen of heaven' or *bēlet šamê* 'lady of heaven' in Assyrian texts (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:335). However, the reception of this motif in Syro-Palestine does not allow for an exclusive identification of the מלכת השמים with Ishtar,[195] and other goddesses like Hathor, 'Anat,

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[192] The motif of Ishtar in the star nimbus is not found among the Syro-Palestinian stamp seals from the Persian period (cf. Klingbeil, 1992b:123f.).

[193] Together with **Figure 48,** this is the only limitation of the number of stars to eight.

[194] Comments Schroer: "Vor allem ist es die Inanna/Ischtar, die in ihrer uranischen Gestalt - als Göttin der Morgenröte, des Abends, der Sterne - verehrt wurde. Ihr Symbol, der Morgen- und Abendstern, begleitet ab der altbabylonischen Zeit die anthropomorphe Darstellung der Göttin oder vertritt sie" (1987:275).

[195] "Die Siegel ... zeigen, daß die assyrische Göttin im Palästina der EZ II C primär in der astral konnotierten Erscheinungsweise im Strahlenkranz bzw. Sternennimbus bekannt war. Sie vermögen aber, für sich allein genommen, deren Identifikation mit der 'Himmelskönigin' kaum zu tragen, da sie überwiegend aus Zentren und

Figure 54

'Astarte, 'Asherah, or Qudschu would be possible candidates for the identification of the 'queen of heaven' as well. Keel and Uehlinger opt for an identification of the Assyrian Ishtar with 'Asherah as the מלכת השמים, but the support which is found in an originally anepigraphic stamp seal with an added Hebrew inscription which shows a four-winged goddess ('Asherah) above a stylized palm tree opposite a two-winged bearded god on a winged *Mischwesen* seems to be somewhat singular and indirect (**Figure 54**):[196] "In einer lokalen *interpretatio judaica* [their italics] hätte der judäische Besitzer die Konstellation auf Jahwe (über einem 'Keruben', vgl. Ps 18,11) und Aschera als 'Himmelskönigin' (über dem stilisierten Baum) beziehen können" (1992:389). Nevertheless, we would agree with a multiple identification of the מלכת השמים determined by geographical and chronological factors.[197]

5.2.3.5. The Celestial Throne

In close proximity to the preceding motif group, the following three specimens will depict gods or goddesses on a throne ornamented with celestial symbols or under a canopy-like structure with similar decorations. All images present the 'queen of heaven', viz., 'king of heaven' themes.
Figure 55 is found on a cylinder seal in the Marcopoli Collection. It is made from serpentine, measuring 32 x 13 mm. The style is Neo-Assyrian

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Transmissionsposten der assyrischen Verwaltung stammen ... und keinen Schluß auf die lokale Rezeption der Göttin erlauben" (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:335).

[196] The seal has been published by Bordreuil (1986:no. 58). The interpretation of the scaraboid has presented a number of difficulties: the Hebrew inscription seems to have been added later on and is not clearly distinguishable, reading a highly doubtful *yḥ[y]hw [š]lm* (Uehlinger, 1993:275). Furthermore, the seal is unique in its iconography and thus should be used cautiously for far-reaching conclusions: "To remain with our example, B 58 [**Figure 54**] shows a religious representation in which its Judaean owner *might* [his italics] have recognized Yahweh and the 'Queen of Heaven', possibly identified with Asherah.... But as the seal remains unique for the time being, we have no other documentary evidence to test such an hypothesis against other documentary evidence" (Uehlinger, 1993:276).

[197] One has to bear in mind that the references to the מלכת השמים in the Hebrew Bible are limited to the time of Jeremiah, which increases the difficulty in creating a consistent biblical image of the goddess.

Figure 55

and it can be dated between 900-700 B.C.[198] On the left side of the scene a sacred tree is depicted below a winged sundisk. Next to it a male worshipper is standing facing toward the right. He is wearing a patterned dress and his hands are possibly extended to the front, although this is not clearly distinguishable. In front of the worshipper the *marru* spade is standing upright on the ground, followed by a Babylonian fire altar. Above these two divine symbols, a curved object is visible which cannot be identified. On the right side of the scene there is a throne on which a figure is seated. The figure is depicted unproportionally large, and is wearing a long patterned dress. Although the face is not clearly distinguishable, it appears that the figure is female, since the hairdress is long and no beard is detectable. She is holding a ring of pearls in her hand.[199] Attached to the back of the throne, there are seven, possibly eight stars, mounted on short pins. In front of the head of the goddess a crescent is visible.

It appears reasonable to identify the goddess with Ishtar who is often found holding a ring of pearls. The astral context of the image would furthermore contribute to this interpretation. She is seated on a throne which through the stars is designated as divine, belonging to the celestial realm, identifying her as an astral deity, i.e., the 'queen of heaven'.

An unpublished seal from the BIF depicts another variant of the celestial throne motif (**Figure 56**). It is an achate cylinder seal with unknown provenance, measuring 20,1 x 7 mm, and its Neo-Assyrian style points to a date in the 7th century B.C. On the right side of the scene a scorpion-man is supporting a winged sundisk from which the upper body of the sun-god is emerging, facing toward the

Figure 56

[198] The seal was published by Teissier (1984:166, fig. 217).

[199] The objects attached to the ring, almost appear like small triangular spikes, but the linear drilling technique explains this appearance of the ring of pearls.

right. Blessing hands, viz., streams of water, are emanating from the wings of the sundisk. To the left of the sundisk a bearded worshipper is standing, facing to the right. He is wearing a patterned long dress and has his hands raised in a gesture of adoration. The center of the image is taken by a male god standing on the back of a bull which in turn is lying on a pedestal (a mountain?). The bearded god is wearing the high Assyrian crown topped with a star (globe), and is armed with a sword attached to his belt. He seems to be holding the bull on a leash with his one hand, while the other hand is grasping a ring and a bundle of lightning. Behind the god a canopy-like structure is depicted leading upwards in a curve toward the head of the god. On its reverse side it is ornamented with globes which should be identified as stars. The scene is completed by the symbols of Marduk and Nabû, the *marru* spade and the *qan tuppi* stylus, above which an eight-pointed star is portrayed. The god can be identified as the Assyrian weather-god Adad on his attribute animal, the bull (cf. Vanel, 1965:fig. 78), holding the bundle of lightning in his hand. The star-ornamented canopy sheltering Adad indicates the celestial dimension of the weather-god. Adad, the 'king of heaven' has to be understood as the male counterpart to Ishtar as the 'queen of heaven' (cf. Weinfeld, 1972:133-154; Winter, 1983:566).

As a final example of the god on a celestial throne motif, a conical stamp seal from 'Amman may be taken (**Figure 57**). The seal is incised on two sides and on the base, whereas our depiction is from one of the sides. The seal is made from carnelian, and archaeologically it can be dated to around 650 B.C.[200] The scene shows a god seated on a throne which is resting on the back of a canine. Although the dog has a long neck more suitable to a gazelle, it can be interpreted as a canine, since it has extended its paws toward the front, while a gazelle would fold in its front legs. The dog is held on a leash. The god is wearing a high crown and has a protruding nose. No beard is detectable. Across the chest of the figure, lines are drawn in order to indicate a patterned dress. On the back of the chair five stars are attached in the form of small globes. The identification of the god is not easily undertaken, since the depiction is very schematic. While the dog of Ba'al is a known motif in Syro-Palestinian iconography (cf. **Figure 9**), especially toward the Persian period, the canine has also been found in connection with the naked goddess on Old Syrian cylinder seals (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:40,

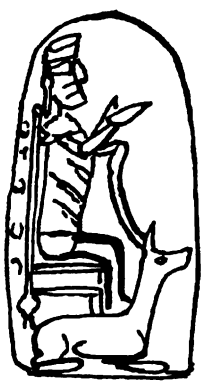

Figure 57

[200] The original publication is Lankester Harding (1953:53f., pl. 6:6).

fig. 37; Keel, 1994a:224). Geographical and chronological factors would point toward Ba'al as a possible candidate for the god on the seal.
The god on the celestial throne motif is predominantly used to depict the 'queen of heaven', viz., the 'king of heaven' in Neo-Assyrian iconography, while **Figure 57** might be a Transjordan adaptation of that motif.

5.2.3.6. The God/dess in Creation

The following three images will present iconographic themes of gods or goddesses involved in creation, i.e., scenes where the deity is predominantly associated with nature or active in it.
The first example is a complex scene which betrays Kassite influences. **Figure 58** represents a cylinder seal impression found on a tablet from Nippur. The impression is 50 mm in height, and the tablet has been dated to the 16th-24th year of Nazi-Maruttsch (1307-1282 B.C.), i.e., the Late Bronze Age IIB.[201] At the center of the scene a double-faced deity is depicted. He is wearing a wide flowing dress which broadens to such an extent at the bottom that another scene is depicted in it: a god in a kneeling position, is holding his arms in front of his body, possibly holding a vase as the god in **Figure 41**. From his shoulders streams of water are flowing downwards. The double-face god has extended his arms to both sides holding the front legs of two winged griffins which are raised on their hind legs in the typical 'Herr der Tiere' position. The scene is flanked by two plants, probably stylized trees. Above the scene the space is filled with birds which can be identified as eagles or birds of prey, since their beaks are sharply curved downwards. The upper part of the scene is concluded by a border of mountains which to some degree resemble the form of the dress of the two-faced god. In between the various elements, cuneiform signs have been inserted, although no convincing reading is provided.[202] The scene depicts the Mesopotamian water- and mountain-god Ea who is the god in the kneeling position,

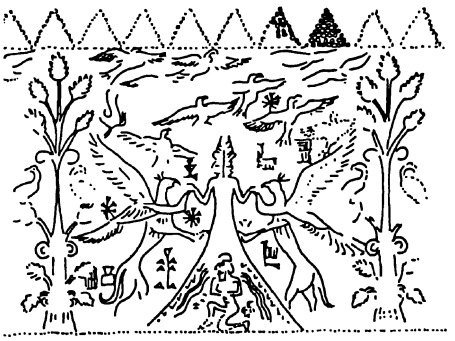

Figure 58

[201] The impression was published by Porada (1952:pl. 29:5; cf. Collon, 1987:178, no. 842).

[202] "The signs on the right of the mountain deity (AN É? x x LIL) seem to make no sense, and those on the left can be read: **ìr dingir.mu ^{d}nin.líl** 'servant of my god, Ninlil', but this is not fully convincing" (Matthews, 1992:114).

providing the water. The second figure is probably his attendant, the two-faced semi-god Usmû who is implementing Ea's blessings in nature, illustrated through the 'Herr der Tiere' motif.[203] The eagles above the scene are known to represent the heavenly realm,[204] while the horizon is constituted by the mountains. A whole cosmology is created in this interesting imagery in which the factors of water, mountains, heaven, and dominion over nature are the key elements.

Another seal (**Figure 59**) from the BIF (no. 156a) shows an agricultural scene with the god in nature motif. The cylinder is made from steatite and it measures 52 x 18 mm.[205] The style is Neo-Assyrian and it can be dated to the 9th century B.C. In the lower part of the image a plowing scene is depicted. A man is holding the plow behind a bull. Behind the man, another man is possibly sowing. In the upper right corner a bull is held by another man. Above an eight-pointed star and crescent can be seen. The upper left corner constitutes the most interesting part of the scene. A god on a pedestal with a knee-long dress and long overcoat is presenting three ears of corn to a goddess in similar dress who is holding a round object which could be identified as a tambourine with respect to the position of the hands. The male god is wearing a horned crown and in his other hand he is holding an ax or hoe. Between the two deities a seven-star is depicted while a bird, presumably a dove, is flying from the goddess toward the god.

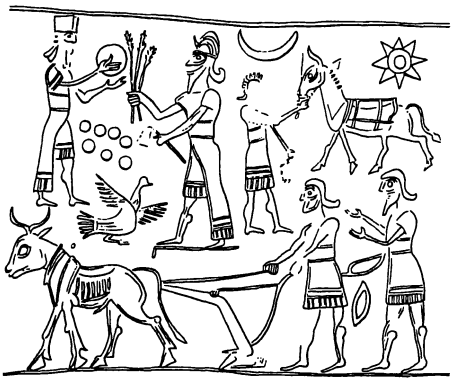

Figure 59

Although the bottom part at first sight seems to be representing a separated agricultural scene, it soon becomes evident that the god is positioned in such a way

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[203] Comment Black and Green on the function of Usmû: "Isimud, or in Akkadian Usmû, is a minor god who functions as a minister to Enki/Ea. ... His name seems to be identical with a word (occurring in both masculine and feminine forms) explained in a commentary as 'with two faces', and so he can be identified with the two-faced deity associated in Mesopotamian art with Enki" (1992:110).

[204] "Die Vorstellung, den Himmel durch einen Adler zu symbolisieren, scheint es ... in neusumerischer Zeit bereits gegeben zu haben.... Auch auf anderen kassitischen Siegeln kommt der Adler über der Szene schwebend - einem ägyptischen Geier ähnlich gebildet - vor" (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:204). Interestingly, the heavenly realm on this seal impression is demarcated by a whole host of eagles, probably indicating the cosmological connotation of the image.

[205] The seal was published by Winter (1977:34) and Keel and Uehlinger (1990:25, fig. 13).

that the bull functions as his characteristic animal, identifying him as the weather-god Adad who is extending the ears of corn toward the goddess Ishtar who demonstrates her willingness to receive his love via the sending of the dove (Keel and Uehlinger, 1990:40, fig. 38). The image has a strong connotation of fertility enhanced by the presence of agricultural activities.[206]

As a final example, a Tridacna shell from Arad can be seen in **Figure 60**. The incised shell is fragmented, its style may be described as Syro-Phoenician probably manufactured in Syria, and the object can be dated to the 7th century B.C.[207] The image shows the upper body of a bearded god emerging from a nimbus of Lotus flowers. He has a long beard and is wearing a high conical headdress which resembles a Lotus flower. One hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. The nimbus is filled with the sun symbol consisting of rays and another two circles within the nimbus. Around the outer nimbus, Lotus buds on stems are depicted. They form a circle and closed buds alternate with blossoming ones. There is a stylized palm tree on the right of the scene, and feathery decoration to the left and above the motif. With Keel and Uehlinger we would suggest that the image does not represent a mere variation of the god with the winged sundisk theme, although the feathery wings are in close proximity to the image: "Weder dieser Gott noch die Gestalt, zu der das darüber gewölbte Flügelpaar gehört, ist mit dem assyrischen 'Mann/Gott in Flügelsonne' ... einfach identisch.... Da Flügelpaar und Lotusnimbus nicht zusammengehören, kann ihre Trennung auch nicht der Ignoranz des Künstlers angelastet werden" (1992:396, n. 373). Thus iconographically a combination of sun-god with creator-god has been

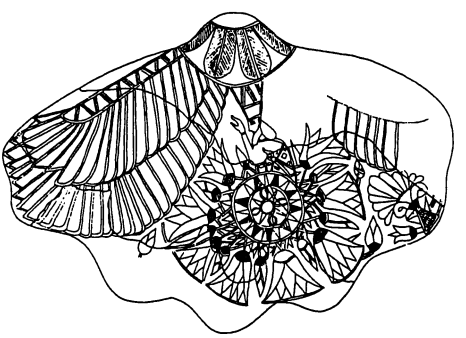

Figure 60

[206] Winter comments about the meaning of the dove in connection with the goddess for ANE iconography: "Die vorderasiatische Göttin mit der Taube kann ihren Ursprung bereits im 3. Jahrtausend v.Chr. in Mesopotamien haben. Ikonographisch nachgewiesen werden kann sie mit Sicherheit erst seit dem Beginn des 2. Jahrtausends (altbabylonische Terrakottareliefs). Vor allem in Syrien scheint die Taube in dieser Zeit zu einem bevorzugten Begleittier der Göttin geworden zu sein" (Winter, 1977:76).

[207] The shell has been published by Brandl (1984:77, fig. 1; cf. also Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:395-397, fig. 337a; Keel and Uehlinger, 1993:297, fig. 10).

accomplished in this scene,[208] since the Lotus flower is clearly associated with creative power.[209]

5.2.3.7. The Winged Sphinx

Although this motif group does not necessarily concentrate on depictions of gods as such, the frequent motif of the winged sphinx in ANE - and especially in Syro-Palestinian - iconography can often be found in close association with deities, e.g., in a protective function or as a throne for the divinity.

The scene depicted in **Figure 61** is found on one of the famous ivory plaques from Megiddo. The ivories can be dated from the end of the Late Bronze Age IIA to the Iron Age IA, while this particular object might have been produced around 1150 B.C.[210] The center of the scene is taken by a king sitting on a throne with a high curved back. The sides of the throne are formed by a standing winged sphinx, i.e., a human-faced lion with wings curved upwards. The king is drinking from a bowl which he raises with his one hand toward his mouth, while he is offering a Lotus flower to a female figure standing in front of him, identified by her richly ornamented dress and crown as the queen. Behind the queen an attendant is playing the harp, while behind the king another two attendants are filling bowls from a large jug similar to the one from which the king is drinking. The animal heads on the jug (lion and gazelle) have been

Figure 61

[208] Keel and Uehlinger interpret: "Vielleicht ist der Gott im Lotusnimbus mit 'El, dem Schöpfer der Erde' (*'lqn 'rṣ*) [sic] zu identifizieren, der im 7. Jh. auch in Jerusalem verehrt wurde, hier vermutlich als ein besonderer Aspekt Jahwes als des Schöpfergottes" (1992:396).

[209] For the original Egyptian motif, cf. Schroer (1987:55-57, n. 172).

[210] The original publication is Loud (1939:pl. 2a-b; cf. Keel, 1977a:18-20, fig. 5; Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:70-72, fig. 65). We have only depicted the left half of the ivory plaque. As Keel and Uehlinger establish, two victory scenes are portrayed on the plaque, separated by three vertically positioned plants to the left of the harp player. The scene to the right, which is not visible here, consists of the following elements, for which Keel and Uehlinger's description may suffice: "Auf einem weiteren, sehr berühmten Elfenbein kehrt ein Fürst im Streitwagen vom siegreichen Kampf zurück.... Zwei nackte, an die Pferde gebundene Schasu-Nomaden gehen vor dem Wagen her.... Die geflügelte Sonnenscheibe über den Pferden erinnert nicht nur an den ägyptischen Ursprung und die Beliebtheit solcher Szenen unter Ramses III., sondern läßt den Sieger von der Gottheit gesegnet erscheinen" (1992:70; cf. Cornelius, 1990:31).

identified as animal-shaped drinking cups (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:71f.). In between the various figures, doves are flying or picking the ground which symbolize messengers of joy, proclaiming the victory of the king over the Shashu nomads depicted on the right part of the ivory plaque. The image represents the celebration of the victory, while the winged sphinx serves as the throne for the king, being not primarily associated with a divinity, though representative of divine protection granted to the king.

Another depiction of the winged sphinx can be seen in **Figure 62**. It is depicted on a scaraboid with unknown provenance. The seal is made from a pale lapislazuli, measuring 14,2 x 10,8 x 7,7.[211] The style can be described as Phoenician-Israelite displaying Egyptian influences,[212] and the seal can be dated with similar specimens (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:289, fig. 249, 250b) in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. The seal shows a winged sphinx facing to the right side which is standing on a double line in a passant position. It is falcon-headed and wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. The wings are pointing diagonally upwards in a straight line, and the tail is upwardly curled in. The sphinx is also wearing an Egyptian-type apron. In front of the *Mischwesen* an *ankh*-sign is depicted in a vertical position, while there is a sundisk above the scene. The position and constellation of the image clearly indicates the protective and apotropaic function of the falcon-headed sphinx. The falcon-headed variant of the winged sphinx was more common in Syro-Palestine than the human-faced type, mostly in connection with epigraphic seals. Sass correlates this phenomenon to the cautious approach toward anthropomorphic depictions in Syro-Palestine during that period (1993:226f., figs. 120-122), although it is highly unlikely that these *Mischwesen* were intended to depict deities, but rather as protective powers with solar

Figure 62

[211] The seal is housed in the YMCA, Jerusalem, and published by Keel and Uehlinger (1992:287-289, fig. 250a).

[212] Comments Keel on the Phoenician-Israelite glyptic style in the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.: "Während die judäische Glyptik im 9. Jh. in billigen Materialien (Kalkstein, Knochen) arbeitete und eher eine traditionelle ägyptische Königsikonographie pflegte, produzierte man im Nordreich in harten Steinen, zum Teil auch in sogenannten Halbedelsteinen. Die Ikonographie kreist weitgehend um Sonnensymbolik und geflügelte Schutzmächte.... Man hat diese Siegel früher generell gern als phönizisch eingeordnet, aber es wird immer deutlicher, dass es auch eine eigene israelitische Produktion gegeben hat..." (1994:233f.).

Figure 63

connotations (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:288-290).

A rather anthropomorph depiction of a winged sphinx is found on an ivory plaque from Samaria, dating to the 9th century B.C. (**Figure 63**).[213] Again, the style is Phoenician-Israelite which explains the clearly detectable Egyptian influences. The winged sphinx is standing on a pedestal facing to the left side. Its wings are intricately worked with a line pattern, probably indicating feathers. The wings appear as almost attached to the side of the sphinx. The *Mischwesen* is in a passant posture and its body is clearly feline, with a short upwardly bent tail. The face is smoothly shaven and the eyes are staring forwards. The sphinx is wearing a somewhat flattened double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt on its head with an Egyptian-type hairstyle, and an apron on its front legs resembling a short kilt. Around the *Mischwesen*, Lotus flowers are depicted in a stylized way. It is not quite clear if the sphinx is protecting a sacred tree as on another ivory plaque from Samaria (Keel, 1977a:19, fig. 3).

A more stylized variant of the winged sphinx motif can be seen in **Figure 64**. The scene is found on a cylinder seal from Tell el-Mazar. It is made from green jasper, measuring 23 x 12 mm. The seal is worked in the Neo-Assyrian linear style with obvious Egyptian influences, and it can be dated from 900-600 B.C.[214] The image shows two winged falcon-headed sphinxes standing on a line, facing each other. Their wings and tails are upwardly curved, and the depiction is rather schematic. In between the two

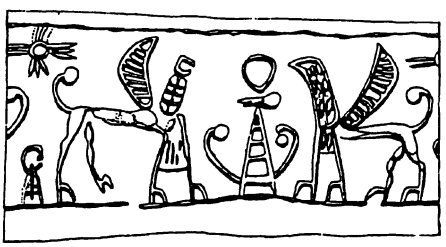

Figure 64

[213] The plaque was published by Crowfoot and Crowfoot (1938:pl. 5).

[214] The seal was published by Yassine (1988:152, no. 304). Describing the archaeological context of the object, the author observes: "The importance of this seal is that it was found inside a mud brick wall (Area L, Square F2, Locus 2b), belonging to a major structure of the Neo-Assyrian Neo-Babylonian Period, destroyed in the Persian Period. Apparently the seal antedates the structure. The question is, did the seal fall whilst the wall was being made, or was it put there on purpose as an act of dedication?"

Mischwesen, a stylized *ankh*-sign is standing upright which has been ornamented in such a way that it resembles the sacred tree. To the left of the scene a winged sundisk is depicted above the winged griffins. The association of the Egyptian *ankh*-sign with the sacred tree shows the Syro-Palestinian adaptations of this apotropaic motif.

Figure 65

Another variant of the winged sphinx motif can be seen on a scaraboid from Tell el-Far'ah (South). The seal is made from glass and has been chipped off in the lower left corner, measuring 17,1 x 13 x 7,4 mm (**Figure 65**). Archaeologically, it can be dated to the 8th century B.C.[215] The impression shows a winged sphinx in a passant position with its tail curved upwardly. Its head is the falcon-type, and instead of the normally expected double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, it is wearing a sundisk on its head. The interesting detail about this representation is the perspective from which the sphinx is shown. Both wings are depicted, one pointing diagonally upwards to the right, the other to the left, so that a sort of a semi-frontal view is created, further enhanced by the way of depiction of the short kilt which is covering the front of the sphinx. The sundisk on its head also seems to be a Syro-Palestinian adaptation of the Egyptian motif, underlining the solar connotation of the image.

A bulla from Umm el-Biyara (**Figure 66**) shows the Transjordan provenance of the winged sphinx motif. The seal impression can be dated to the 7th century B.C.[216] As often found on seals with both inscription and motif, the seal is divided by lines into three registers: the middle register is filled with the iconographic motif, while the

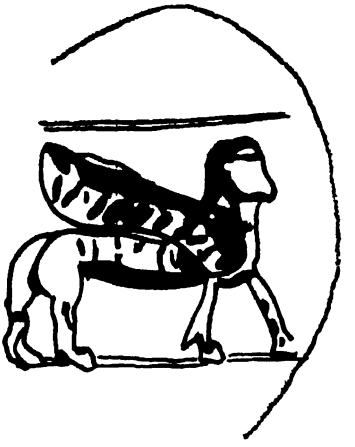

Figure 66

[215] The scaraboid was found in area F8, level 381", and is now housed in the Institute of Archaeology, London. The original publication is Keel and Uehlinger (1992:287-289, fig. 251).

[216] Most often the bulla has been treated from a palaeographic perspective: Herr (1978:162f.); Bienkowski (1990:94, fig. 5); and Lemaire (1993:5, 8, 23, fig. 6).

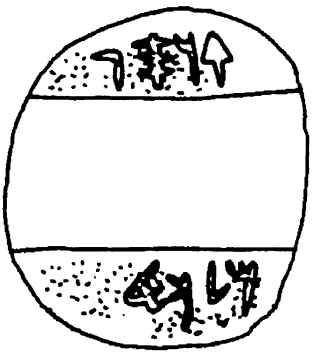

Figure 67

upper and lower registers bear the inscription (cf. Sass, 1993:204f.). The winged sphinx is facing to the right, standing in a passant position. It is wearing an Egyptian hairdress, but no crown is distinguishable. The wing is long and depicted from the side. It is curved slightly upwards, being ornamented with stripes.

The inscription on the bulla is not easily read, and the drawing provided here (**Figure 67**) is to a certain degree a reconstruction. Palaeographically, the script is Edomite and the shape of letters would locate the inscription in the first half of the 7th century B.C. (Herr, 1978:162). The inscription reads *qwsg*[*br*] *mlk* '[*dm*] 'Qos-gabr, king of Edom'[217] which would identify the seal impression as belonging to the Edomite king mentioned in Assyrian texts from the reign of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal.

To conclude this motif group, two representations of the winged sphinx functioning as a throne will be shown. The first one is found on an oval stamp seal from Cyprus, measuring 21 x 16 mm (**Figure 68**). Although no further archaeological context is given, the seal appears to be the product of a Phoenician workshop during the 7th century B.C.[218] The seal bears the name of its owner at the bottom of the scene below the standing line, reading לדנשר '(belonging) to Gadshar'. The scene shows a winged sphinx in a passant position, standing on a double line. The hairdress of the *Mischwesen* is Egyptian, the wing is pointing diagonally upwards, and the curved tail is also upwardly directed. The sphinx and its wings appear to function as the side supports of a throne, since the back rest of the throne is discernible on its back. A male figure is sitting on the throne. He is wearing a conical crown, a long hairdress, and is sporting a beard. While

Figure 68

[217] Lemaire tries to substantiate this reading: "... un examen attentif de la bulle édomite *qwsg*[*br*] *mlk* '[*dm*], trouvée à Umm el-Biyara ..., fait apparaître la forme d'un *d* inversé à la fin de la ligne 2 qu'on lit donc *mlk* '*d*[*m*]" (1993:5; cf. Bartlett, 1989:138-140, 213).

[218] The seal has been published by Galling (1941:174, no. 13, pl. 5:13; cf. Keel, 1977a:31f., fig. 16).

his one hand is raised in a gesture of greeting or blessing,[219] the other hand is holding a lance or javelin in a vertical position. Since the headdress and the context with the winged sphinx identify the figure as a deity, we would suggest that the scene represents a depiction of the Phoenician god Melqart sitting on his throne. Melqart was the city god of Tyre, and his worship spread throughout the Phoenician colonies, while the seal and similar images probably represent a depiction of a cult statue of the Phoenician god, erected in the city of Tyre (Culican, 1960-61:41).[220]

A similar depiction of Melqart may serve as a final example for this motif group. **Figure 69** can be found on a scarab from Tharros, Sardinia which has been discovered in a grave dating from 600-400 B.C.[221] At the bottom of the scene the typical Phoenician cross-hatched and arc-shaped exergue can be seen which normally denotes "'celestial terrain,' the mountainous dwelling of the gods, indicating that the scene represented is cosmic or celestial" (Culican, 1969:55). The sphinx is standing above the exergue and is depicted in the now familiar Egyptianizing fashion with the Egyptian hairstyle and the upwardly curved wings, supporting the side of the throne of which the back rest is visible. The god is wearing a conical crown with a pointed peak, and his hair is curling upwards from under it. In the front an uraeus is attached to the crown, while a tassel can be seen on the back of the hat.[222] The god is dressed in a cross hatched cape which covers the arms. He is holding a camel stick in his one hand resembling the *w3s*-scepter, while the other hand is extended in the greeting gesture, similar to **Figure 68**. Directly in front of the god a spear-like object is standing on the ground in an upright position.

Figure 69

[219] The gesture seems to be different to the position of the hands encountered on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals (e.g., **Figure 32**). The Phoenician god seems to extend his hands with the palm turned away from him in a vertical position, while the Neo-Assyrian gesture normally appears to have the palm turned upwards in a horizontal or diagonal position.

[220] Melqart also appears in Ba'al-like posture as the smiting god, while he has been described as the Ba'al of Sidon and Tyre (Klingbeil, 1992b:109).

[221] Culican has published a number of Phoenician scarabs from the various Phoenician colonies depicting the god Melqart (1960-61:46, fig. 1d; cf. Keel, 1977a:32, fig. 15).

[222] It also appears possible to identify these two objects as bull's horns. However, the more Egyptianizing uraeus seem to be more probable in a Phoenician context.

The winged sphinx motif was prevalent in ANE iconography throughout the 1st millennium B.C.,[223] especially throughout the Syro-Palestinian region, since most of our examples stem from this area. The original Egyptian solar motif was brought via the Phoenician coastal line to the Levant, while the addition of the wings enhanced the significance of this apotropaic symbol (Keel, 1977a:35). Chronologically, the sphinx seems to have first served as a throne for a human king, followed by depictions of the sphinx on its own in a protective position, often guarding an *ankh*-sign, while the later Phoenician variants portray the winged sphinx in its function as a throne for the deity, i.e., Melqart of Tyre.

The throne supported by the winged sphinx has repeatedly been associated with the cherubim throne of the Bible which presupposes the identification of the winged sphinx with the biblical cherubim.[224] While this notion seems to be correct, the function of the winged sphinx as a throne for a deity seems not to be represented in Palestine/Israel, except on terracotta fragments dating from the early Iron Age and possibly depicting empty thrones supported by winged sphinxes (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:190f.).[225] While the presence of the winged sphinx in its protective function is noticeable throughout Palestine/Israel, its usage as a throne for a deity is restricted to the Phoenician realm of influence. Keel and Uehlinger comment on the function of the cherubim as throne-bearers:

> In den aus Löwen (Leib), Vogel (Adler- oder Geierflügel) und Mensch (Gesicht) zusammengesetzten Keruben sind die höchsten Kräfte kreatürlicher Gewalt vereinigt. Als Thronträger charakterisieren diese Mischwesen die über ihnen thronende Gestalt - nicht ausschießlich, aber großmehrheitlich Könige oder Gottheiten männlichen Geschlechts ... - als übermächtigen König bzw. 'höchsten Gott'... (1992:191).

In Palestine/Israel the depiction of that imagery seems to have been limited to an empty throne or a sphinx in protective posture.

5.2.3.8. The Winged God/dess

Anthropomorph depictions of gods or goddesses with wings are primarily associated with the Iron Age IIB in Syro-Palestine exhibiting Assyrian influences.

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[223] And certainly already before that as well.

[224] This notion has been widely accepted: "Gegen die weithin akzeptierte Identifizierung der Kerubim mit geflügelten Sphingen wird heute nur noch von wenigen die Meinung vertreten, die Kerubim, besonders die von 1 Kön 6,23-28 seine menschengestaltig gewesen" (Keel, 1977a:18).

[225] Our example from Iron Age IA Meggido (**Figure 61**) clearly associates the cherubim throne with a king and not with a deity.

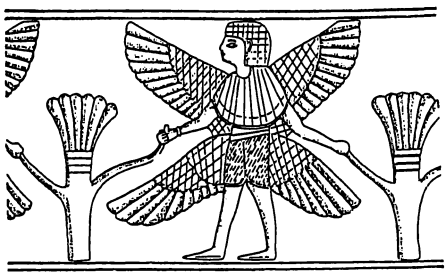

Figure 70

Figure 70 is derived from a bone carving found at Hazor. It can be dated to the first half of the 8th century B.C. and is of Phoenician-Israelite style. Keel and Uehlinger comment on the distribution of similar images: "Darstellungen dieses Gottes scheinen in Phönizien und Israel recht verbreitet gewesen zu sein, wogegen sie in Juda bislang noch nicht bezeugt sind" (1992:220).[226] The image shows a male god in a passant position facing to the left, standing on a double line. He is beardless and wearing a flat cap which is ornamented with a Phoenician-type cross-hatched design.[227] He is dressed with a patterned cape around his shoulders, and a short skirt. On his back he has four wings diagonally opposite each other, also patterned in Phoenician fashion. His arms are extended to both sides, holding onto a branch of a stylized tree which can be recognized as the sacred palm tree on account of the form of its leaves. The young god without beard can be identified as the youthful Ba'al in his connotation as vegetation and fertility deity with celestial attributes:

> Jugendlichkeit und Flügelpaar charakterisierten schon in der SB-Zeit den Gott Ba'al; die Verdoppelung der Flügel in der EZ II B potenziert den uranischen Aspekt ebenso, wie sie die Allgegenwart des Gottes markiert. Die Blüten bzw. der Baum signalisieren einen engen Zusammenhang des Gottes mit der Vegetation; Blüte oder Zweig konnten schon in der MB II B in der Hand des Wettergottes erscheinen... (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:220).

Another depiction of the four-winged god can be found on an inscribed scaraboid from Tello (**Figure 71**).[228] The seal is made from agate, measuring 22 x 15,5 x 11,7 mm and has been dated to the middle of the 8th century B.C.[229] On it depicted there is a male god standing on a double line facing to the left. He is wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower

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[226] The original publication is Yadin (1958:182, pl. 151; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:220-222, fig. 210). The object was found in the upper city of Hazor, stratum I.

[227] The design may also indicate the hairdress which displays Egyptian features.

[228] The seal has been published by Galling (1941:185f., no. 91, pl. 7:91; cf. also Keel, 1977a:200-202, fig. 150). Timm (1992:190) describes the scaraboid as being without provenance, while Galling and Gubel (1992:125, fig. 65) mention Tello as the place of origin.

[229] Herr proposes a date in the last half of the 7th century B.C. on palaeograpic grounds (1978:158).

Figure 71

Egypt and a short skirt.[230] The god has extended his arms toward both sides holding a snake in each hand.[231] Four wings are attached to his back, two pointing diagonally upwards and two in a diagonal downwards position. The wings are decorated with stripes. There are two streamer-like objects in front and behind the figure's head coming from above which could also be identified as a ל (Timm, 1993:176). The inscription below the standing line can be identified as Moabite (Herr, 1978:158,no. 8; Gubel, 1992:123) reading בעלנתן *'b'alnatan'* which points to the name of the seal owner. Since the verbal forms in compound names which are starting with a נ instead of a י, are unlikely Phoenician, the question arises as to where the seal was manufactured: "Inzwischen verdichten sich jedoch die Gründe dafür, daß mit Siegelwerkstätten in phönizischer Handwerkstradition Mitte des 8. Jhs. auf dem Boden des Nordreiches Israel zu rechnen ist" (Timm, 1993:177). Since the god on the scaraboid can be identified as Ba'al, the theophoric element of the inscription would correspond to the iconographic depiction on the seal which is not necessarily to be expected in ANE glyptic. Aside from the epigraphic evidence, one would anticipate the Moabite god Kemoš on a seal from this region. However, the iconographic evidence points to a depiction of Ba'al, unless the iconography of these two gods was so close during that period that the attributes of the one god were transferable to the other (Timm, 1993:177).

Although the female goddess with four wings is usually associated with Neo-Assyrian influences (Winter, 1983:189) and uncommon in the Syro-Palestinian region, the motif has been found on a scaraboid with unknown provenance bearing a Hebrew inscription dating to the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. (**Figure 72**).[232] It shows a naked goddess in an *en face* posture.[233] She

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[230] We have chosen Gubel's line drawing as the most recent one. On Galling's and Keel's drawing (cf. note 228) the short skirt is striped and the facial features of the god are clearly distinguishable, while the crown is less clear.

[231] If one compares the depiction of the objects held by the god on similar depictions, one could interpret them also as branches comparable to the image in **Figure 70**.

[232] The seal was published by Bordreuil (1986: no. 44; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:385-387, fig. 331a).

has extended her arms to both sides holding a rod in each hand. On the rod a star or a flower is mounted. The wings are modeled and decorated in the Phoenician curved manner, while one pair is pointing upwards and the other one is pointing diagonally downwards. Her headdress is not easily distinguishable, since the seal has been chipped at the top, but it appears that she is has a pair of horns on her head reminiscent of the Egyptian Isis. The inscription is reading גאל בן שׁעל with the individual letters interspersed into the open spaces denoting the name of its owner.

Figure 72

Since the motif is somewhat uncommon in Syro-Palestine during the Iron Age IIC, an identification of the goddess has to remain tentative, but the female winged figure is bearing celestial attributes which would associate her with 'Astarte or 'Asherah, although the naked depiction would favour 'Astarte as a possible candidate for the figure on **Figure 72**. Keel and Uehlinger comment on the popularity of the winged naked goddess during the Iron Age IIC: "Das Fehlen der Nacktdarstellungen in Juda stimmt mit der literarischen Überlieferung überein, wonach 'Astarte besonders in den Küstenregionen breite Verehrung genoß, in Juda aber kein größere Bedeutung hatte" (1992:385). The scaraboid may thus be the product of a Northern Israelite workshop influenced by Phoenician glyptic traditions. Since the imagery on the seal remains exceptional, it appears advisable to exert some caution in connecting the naked winged goddess with the biblical 'queen of heaven', although the celestial connotations are clearly noticeable.[234]

The winged god/dess motif appears to have been prevalent during the 9th/8th centuries B.C., whereas its popularity was restricted to the Phoenician coastal belt and the Northern Israelite Phoenician-influenced

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[233] Sass contends, with regard to the position of the female goddess, that "frontality is a way of exhibiting female nudity" (1993:236).

[234] Speculates Uehlinger: "And nothing compels us to deny that another Israelite or Judaean individual, *g'l bn š'l*, could have recognized the four-winged naked goddess holding astral staffs shown on *his* [his italics] ... as a representation of the 'Queen of Heaven' either. Fascinating as both documents [**Figure 54** and **Figure 72**] may be, they remain unique, and their weight for the religious history is thus limited in comparison to other seals which, being more conventional, may be related to a 'significant series'..." (1993:276).

workshops who might have 'exported' **Figure 71** to the Moabite realm. Although the uranian connotation of the motif is noticeable, the identification of the winged goddess with the 'queen of heaven' is not easily undertaken, while the male god displays attributes that would clearly associate him with Ba'al in a vegetation and fertility connotation.

5.2.3.9. Miscellania

Under this heading we will include motifs which display god of heaven attributes although the selection of such images for the present study is not of a sufficient quantity and significance to justify the formation of a motif group in its own right.

An interesting motif is found on a cylinder seal impression from Toprak Kale (Tushpa), Turkey, dating to the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. (**Figure 73**).[235] On the left side of the scene a winged griffin or bull can be seen in a passant position. In front of him a sundisk with rays (or a star) is depicted. To the right a cart is portrayed with its axle pointing forwards. The object which is pulling the wagon is not visible. The cart is depicted in such a way that it appears like a ship with one mast whereas a star is possibly attached to the top of the mast pole. Above the axle another star or sundisk is visible. The cart is followed by a worshipper in a walking position who has raised his hands in a gesture of adoration toward the wagon. The scene is demarcated by a line at the top and the bottom.

While we are not aware of any close parallels for this motif, the imagery seems to represent a religious procession whereas the connotation is clearly celestial or cosmic. The affinity to Neo-Assyrian cult practice, i.e., the wagon and horses of the sun-god going through the land, may be a possible interpretation for such an image. Keel and Uehlinger understand the allusion to horses and chariots dedicated to the sun in 2Ki 23:11 as a reference for such a religious practice:[236] "Der

Figure 73

[235] The impression has been published by Weber (1920:no. 412; cf. also Collon, 1987:161, no. 736).

[236] The text in 2Ki 23:11 reads: 'And he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire' (RSV). A number of horse and rider statuettes has been found in Jerusalem (no wagons though) which could serve as an indicator for the presence of the worship of the Neo-Assyrian sun-god Šamaš (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:392f., figs. 333a-336).

Gebrauch von Pferden und Götterwagen ist typisch für die assyrische Divination in der Sargonidenzeit (Ende 8./7. Jh.), bei der gerade der allwissende Sonnengott Schamasch eine zentrale Rolle spielte.... Die Pferde dienten somit wohl als Medien für die Divination, die Wagen setzten den unsichtbaren Gottheit [sic] gegenwärtig" (1992:394). The date of the object illustrated in indicates the wide-spread presence of this cult practice throughout the Neo-Assyrian empire.

Another interesting image is represented on a stone relief from Maltaya which is Neo-Assyrian or Babylonian in style, and can therefore be dated from the 8th to 6th centuries B.C. (**Figure 74**). The relief is 6 m in length and 1,85 m in height.[237] Depicted on it, there is a procession of seven deities, each standing on his or her characteristic animal. The procession is enclosed by two male figures, each turned toward the gods, having raised their hands to their mouth in a gesture of adoration. The bearded figures are wearing a long patterned dress and a high tiara which ends in a globe. Although it is possible to identify them as the Assyrian or Babylonian king, their twofold representation would point to the fact that we are confronted with two adorants, nevertheless attired in royal dress. The first god (from left to right) is depicted slightly taller than the remainder of the procession and his leading position may point to his preeminent role within the procession. He is standing on a dog-like animal and is holding the ring and rod in his one hand, while the other hand is grasping a curved object possibly a weapon. A sword is attached to his belt. The second deity is a goddess seated on a throne which has four globes (stars) attached to its back. She is the only seated deity, and is holding a ring in her hand. Her attribute animal is a lion. The third god is holding the same objects in his hands as the first god, while he is wearing a high crown which ends in a platform, decorated with a star. He is standing on a bull. Gods number four and five are identically depicted except for the animals on which they are standing. Both are holding the ring and rod in their one hand, while the other hand is raised in a gesture of blessing. To their belts swords are attached. Number four is standing on a canine, while five is standing on a horse. God number six is in a similar position, standing on a bull, whereas the ring and rod have been replaced by a three-forked bundle

Figure 74

[237] The relief was published by Ward (1910:fig. 749; cf. also Wiseman, 1958b:17, pl. 8:1; and Pritchard, 1969b:314f., no. 537).

of lightning. The procession is concluded by another goddess, standing on a lion who is holding a ring in one hand, while the other hand is raised. All the gods are dressed in like fashion, and only the first god is wearing a slightly different crown. While one would expect the identification of this Assyrian pantheon as the next methodological step, we would suggest that the depiction is not directed at giving a comprehensive introduction to the Assyrian or Babylonian list of gods, but rather to demonstrate a religious ceremony in which various gods who have a certain sociological and hierarchical relationship with each other are included. Thus the image is not only anthropomorphically oriented but also sociomorphically, i.e., showing the sociological order within the pantheon, while we would go as far as to suggest that some gods portrayed in the scene might be identified as representing the same god or goddess.[238] Uehlinger has demonstrated in a detailed study of an Old-Syrian cylinder seal which shows a divine audience scene that an image "stellt aber *per se* [his italics] nicht individuierte Größen dar, sondern wie gesagt Rollenträger(innen)" (1992:350). Thus an identification of the gods depicted in **Figure 74** has to remain tentative, the more so, since its provenance is not known, and the names of gods varied in different localities.[239]

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[238] The identification of the deities has been the subject of much discussion, e.g., the seated goddess and the standing goddess would both in accordance with their attributes be ideal candidates for Ishtar, here represented in two different appearances which are, nevertheless, both characteristic of that deity, and have been encountered before. Along the same line, the god on the horse is likely to be a depiction of Šamaš, although he is depicted in like manner as the preceding deity. The god with the bundle of lightning standing on the bull may be identified as the weather-god Adad, although god no. three is standing on the same animal carrying differing weapons. The first god may be the king of the Assyrian gods, Asshur, portrayed in an elevated position, although his attributes are reoccurring throughout the whole procession. Pritchard suggests the following identification of the gods/goddesses (from left to right): Asshur, Ninlil (or Ishtar of Niniveh), Enlil, Sin, Šamaš, Adad, and Ishtar (1969b:314f.).

[239] Uehlinger's article is an interesting case-study in iconographic methodology, since it concentrates on an individual image and tries to establish its meaning first from an iconographic perspective (1992:340, n. 12). Only then the image is related to textual sources, while it is especially interesting to note the change of textual paradigm Uehlinger applies to the seal: "Bei der namentlichen Identifikation der auf dem Siegel von *Abb. 1* dargestellten Gottheiten bin ich *ex hypothesi* stark von epigraphischen Befunden aus Mari ausgegangen.... Nehmen wir *ad experimentum* [all his italics] einmal eine ugaritische Perspektive ein: Würden wir nur die mythologischen Texte aus Ras Shamra kennen, so hätten wir ohne Zögern vier der dargestellten Gottheiten namentlich als Ba'al (A), 'Anat (B), Aṯirat (C) und El (E) identifiziert" (1992:355). While the image does not concern us here, his methodological approach is interesting: a different setting merits a completely different identification of the figures depicted on the image. Thus, not the identification of the involved deities is the ultimate goal in the iconographic interpretation - unless the image is clearly associated with an epigraphic source - but rather inner meaning and problem structure of the image become the preeminent focus.

Images displaying god of heaven attributes have been presented by means of nine different motif groups, while the ninth one comprised two individual images with different themes. It has been demonstrated that the imagery displaying these attributes encloses a variety of widely differing objects which have been associated with each other by a common denominator, i.e., their celestial or cosmic connotations.

5.2.4. Gods with Warrior and God of Heaven Attributes

As a last class of iconographic motifs, images will be presented which exhibit both warrior and god of heaven attributes. While a number of the images below will resemble motifs we have discussed already under the preceding sections, the scenes presented will be of such a nature that they combine the two attribute groups.

5.2.4.1. The Smiting God with the Vegetation-Spear

An interesting motif is the smiting god whereas the weaponry of the deity exhibits the god of heaven attributes, i.e., the usage of vegetation as a weapon. We have limited our examples to one, although there are a number of images that depict this motif (cf. Vanel, 1965:177, figs. 36, 39, 41; especially Cornelius, 1994:140f.)

The first example (**Figure 75**) of this motif is found on a stela from Ras Shamra (Ugarit). It is made of white limestone with a rounded top, measuring 142 x 47-50 x 28 cm, a size which clearly indicates "that it is not a private monument, but an official stela that functioned in the cult of Ba'al at Ugarit" (Cornelius, 1994:139). It was found by Schaeffer in 1932, and has originally been dated to a date within the Middle Bronze Age, ranging from 1900-1750 B.C., but it appears evident that the original stratigraphic context was dubious so

Figure 75

Again with regard to Uehlinger's seal: "Aber wer Texte (und Bilder) nicht nur hinsichtlich ihrer positiv dargestellten bzw. explizit geäußerten Behauptungen, sondern auch mit etwas Sensibilität für die ihnen zugrundeliegenden Probleme, also Texte wie Bilder in erster Linie als *Problemträger* [his italics] zu lesen versteht, wird die grundlegende Strukturanalogie zwischen unserem Siegel und dem ugaritischen 'Anat-Ba'al-Mythos kaum bestreiten können" (1992:355f.). There, however, one again arrives at the texts, and it appears that the text still remains a corrective measure against a uniformistic or retrospective interpretation of an ANE image.

that the original dating had to be reconsidered. From comparative material a date in the Late Bronze Age thus seems much more likely which would move the object to the time period under consideration for this study.[240] The relief shows a barefooted male figure in a passant position facing to the right. He is standing on three lines under which a curved line can be seen.[241] The figure is wearing a short kilt which is ornamented with a horizontal stripes and held together by a broad belt. A curved dagger or sword is attached to the belt. The figure is wearing a helmet with a high point from which a pair of bull horns protrude to the front. He has a long beard reaching to his chest, and his hair ends in long curls (cf. **Figure 20**). The god has his right hand raised above his head holding a club ready to strike, while the other hand is holding a spear in a vertical position with the broad blade pointing to the ground.

The shaft of the spear spreads out into a plant, and not into a shaft of lightning as proposed elsewhere, since the iconography of the weather-god with the bundle of lightning is completely different from this depiction (Cornelius, 1994:137, n. 2).[242] In front of the deity a miniature figure is standing on a pedestal with one hand raised in a gesture of adoration.[243]

The identification of the figure does not present major problems, and we are confronted with a depiction of the weather-god Ba'al in his normal posture as the smiting god, but holding a vegetation-spear in his hand, thus establishing his close affinity to fertility and vegetation, combining warrior and god of heaven attributes. Comments Cornelius:

> ... Ba'al is not holding a bolt of thunder or lightning, but rather a plant or tree-like weapon with which he strikes down the serpent.... In the texts from Ugarit, Ba'al is described as a god who possesses lightning and thunder (*KTU* 1.3 III 23, 1.101 obv 3-4) and he is the bringer of rain and fertility (*KTU* 1.4 VII 29-31 and 1.16 III 5ff).

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[240] Cornelius dates the stela between 1700 and 1400 B.C. and summarizes the various positions on the chronology and comparative endeavours: "It is believed that the stela can be dated in the LB age, although the terminus a quo may lie in the MB period. The stela contains a mixture of Syrian, Egyptian and Hittite styles ... typical of the Late Bronze Age" (1994:139). Cf. Cornelius for the original publication and a list of pertinent literature on the stela (1994:135f.).

[241] The three lines and the curved line is once more repeated below, but is not depicted in our line drawing. The interpretation of the curved lines as mountains is not unlikely, but it rather appears to be a simple decoration (cf. Cornelius, 1994:136, n. 1).

[242] Comments Cornelius: "It is remarkable that not one definite depiction of Ba'al with lightning ... could be traced, not even on the seals.... More typical of Ba'al is the menacing figure with raised hand/weapon and tree/spear..." (1994:141).

[243] It is not quite clear what this figure indicates: a worshipper or another deity, since the figure is standing on a pedestal. The figure might be wearing the garment with rolled borders (*Wulstsaummantel* - cf. Schroer in Keel and Schroer, 1985:53-107), pointing to a royal figure which would be in tune with the gesture.

However, thunder or lightning is not depicted on *BR1*. The only relationship with fertility is the vegetative top of his weapon (1994:141).

5.2.4.2. The Smiting God with the Bundle of Lightning

Another variation of the smiting god motif is the depiction of the deity with a bundle of lightning in his hand, thus transcending the mere warrior theme in using the lightning as a meteorological weapon.

Figure 76 is found on a hematite seal with unknown provenance, measuring 20 x 10 mm.[244] The style is Assyrian or Babylonian and the object has been dated to ca. 1000 B.C., although the motif is certainly older.[245] Depicted on it, to the left side of the scene, there is a figure dressed in a long robe. Since the figure is wearing a horned crown, it can be identified with a god or goddess. The deity has raised his/her hand in a gesture of blessing toward another god in a slit skirt. The god has raised his one foot onto a pedestal which is symbolic of his mountainous realm.[246] He is wearing a two-pointed cap and no beard is discernible. [247] His one arm is raised above his head ready to strike, holding a scimitar with his hand, while the other hand is extended to the front, holding the double-forked bundle of lightning in an upright position, identifying him as the weather-god. Comments Vanel: "Le foudre est évidemment le symbole le plus caractéristique du dieu de l'orage. ... Le foudre babylonien 'classique', avec ses deux branches aux zigzags réguliers ..., évoque sans doute l'éclair déchirant le ciel" (1965:164). Behind the weather-god a stylized fish is depicted standing in an upright position, possibly indicating the presence of a priest, but clearly betraying Babylonian influences. The scene is completed by an inscription reading ^{d}*Šamaš* ^{d}*a-a* 'Šamaš (and) Aia'. If one presupposes any connection between the inscription and the image on the seal, we would be

Figure 76

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[244] The seal is housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library, and was published by Ward (1920:pl. 14:100).

[245] Cf. Moortgat who discusses a cylinder seal with an identical inscription and similar motifs (1940:51, no. 517).

[246] The motif of the god standing on a mountain will concern us below (cf. Vanel, 1965:nos. 9, 17, 31).

[247] The depiction is, however, of such a poor quality that these observations have to remain somewhat tentative.

confronted by a portrayal of the Šamaš depicted with the attributes and posture of the weather-god Adad, while the deity on the opposite side would be the wife of Šamaš, the goddess Aia. However, a depiction of Šamaš as the weather-god is uncommon, and it appears more in tune with the iconography of the cylinder seal to identify him as Adad.

A Northern Syrian variation of the smiting-, viz., weather-god with the bundle of lightning can be seen in **Figure 77**. It is found on an inscribed stela from Til Barsib (Tell 'Ahmar) and is made from basalt, measuring 206 cm in height, again a monument of substantial size (cf. **Figure 75**).[248] Although without a certain archaeological context, the stela has been dated by its original excavators to the 12th and 11th centuries B.C., but from a series of comparative monuments a date in the 10th or beginning of the 9th century seems more likely (Vanel, 1965:135). The stela is in the Neo-Hittite style. The monument has been broken off at the bottom, but a male god is visible facing to the right. He is wearing a short skirt or kilt with a broad belt to which a short sword with a rounded hand-grip is attached. The upper body is covered with a short-sleeved shirt. On his head he is wearing a high crown with a rounded top from which four horns protrude, two to the front and two toward the back.[249] The god is adorned with an intricately plaited hairdress with a long beard and a double plait on his back which reaches downwards below his shoulder ending in an upwardly curled spiral. His one arm is raised above his head in a striking position, brandishing a weapon which can be identified as an ax with a short hand-grip.[250] In his other hand the god is holding a three-forked curved bundle of lightning which resembles the form of a 'W'. The three-forked form of the bundle of lightning is Hittite or Assyrian in character, while the two-forked type is usually found in Babylonian contexts. Above his head a winged sundisk and

Figure 77

[248] The stela is housed in the Louvre and has been published by Thureau-Dangin and Dunand (1936:134f., pl. 1; cf. Pritchard, 1969b:313, no. 532).

[249] The position of the horns on the crown already exhibits Assyrian influences (Vanel, 1965:136).

[250] Vanel argues that the smiting position with the ax in one hand and the bundle of lightning in the other hand, actually represents two iconographic motifs, i.e., that of the weather-god and that of the warrior-god, whereas these two imageries are shown as two distinct deities in the Cappadocian tradition: "Elle sert en tous cas à montrer en lui un dieu guerrier, ce qui est tout à fait conforme à la tradition cappadocienne du 'second dieu'" (1965:137).

crescent is visible (cf. Pritchard, 1969b:no. 532).[251] Unfortunately the stela has been broken off at the bottom, so that one cannot distinguish on what object the weather-god is standing. From comparative material a bull seems the most likely candidate (cf. Pritchard, 1969b:fig. 531; see also below).
The identification of the god with the bundle of lightning as the weather-god appears obvious, although the nomenclature may be different in this case. Inscriptions attached to the image and similar representation assign the name of the celestial storm-god Tarhunzas to the god which in the Hittite hieroglyphs is represented by a '^{d}W' reminiscent of the form of the bundle of lightning.[252] This Tarhunzas must have functioned as a weather-god with a preeminent position in the Syro-Hittite pantheon.[253] It is interesting to note the aggressive posture of the figure which combines the god of heaven and warrior attributes in an expressive manner.

Figure 78

The 'Assyrianized' version of the smiting god motif with the bundle of lightning is demonstrated by **Figure 78**, a stela found at Arslan-Tash. The stela is made from basalt and measures 135 cm in height. It was found in the temple constructed by Tiglath-pileser III (744-727) which dates it with some accuracy to the second half of the 8th century B.C.[254] The image shows a god in a striding position facing to the right. He is standing on top

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[251] Unfortunately, these details have not been reproduced in the line drawing which we have taken from Vanel (1965:183, fig. 68). It is a recurring problem with Vanel that he isolates iconographic elements relevant for his study, thus destroying the iconographic context of the image.

[252] There is an unpublished basalt stela almost identical to **Figure 77** in the Tel Aviv Museum, dating to the 10th/9th centuries B.C. Except for a cruder rendering of the motif, the image is basically the same. The inscription attached to the stela identifies the god as Tarhunzas, but gives further information in naming Hamiyatas as the author of the inscription: "Hamiyatas calls himself King of Masuwari, which ... is the indigenous name of Til-Barsip, prior to its Aramaization. The inscription follows a stereotyped pattern describing the benevolence bestowed by the storm-god on Hamiyatas and concludes with a typical curse directed against whoever may damage the stela. Of additional historical import is the information that upon the command of the storm-god, Hamiyatas built a city, possibly the site where the commemorative stela was erected" (Merhav, 1987:no. 124).

[253] Comments Vanel: "Comme il est appelé parfois 'Tarhund du ciel' ou 'dieu de l'orage du ciel' et figure en tête d'une liste de dieux plusieurs fois reproduite, il est dans doute considéré officiellement comme le grand dieu de l'orage" (1965:137).

[254] The stela was published by Thureau-Dangin, *et al.* (1931:65f., pl. 2:1; cf. Vanel, 1965:149, no. 71).

of a bull with his one foot on its horns, while the other foot rests on the animal's back. The posture is indicating a running motion, whereas the bull is depicted in a similar stance (Vanel, 1965:149). The god is dressed with a short kilt over which he is wearing a long robe. The borders of the dress are patterned and the robe is draped in such a way around the figure that a long striped pattern is flowing from the shoulder to the foot of the figure. The hairdress consists of a long beard and a bulk of long hair held together in a kind of chignon in the neck of the figure. On his head the god is wearing the high rectangular horned crown, customary to depictions of Neo-Assyrian gods. Above the crown a disk is visible with rays depicted in it, possibly indicating astral symbolism (cf. Yadin, 1970:199-231). The god is armed with a long sword attached to his belt which is pointing toward the back. On his shoulder he is carrying a bow and a quiver.[255] His one arm is raised above his head in a striking or throwing position, while the other arm is extended diagonally downwards toward the front. In both hands he is holding a double three-forked bundle of lightning. From a Neo-Assyrian perspective the god can be identified with the weather-god Adad, whereas the three-forked bundle of lightning in the striking hand has replaced the normally expected weapon. He is now equipped completely with meteorological weapons and the character of the lightning as an attacking weapon becomes increasingly evident. It is no longer held in a passive gesture in front of the god, but raised above his head with the intention to strike down on the imaginary enemy: "Le dieu de l'orage assyrien d'Arslan-Tash apparaît donc comme un dieu guerrier en pleine action. Une telle image semble conforme aux textes où Adad est nommé parmi les dieux qui répandent la terreur devant l'armée du roi" (Vanel, 1965:150).
The single most important element in the identification of the weather-god remains the bundle of lightning (Abou Assaf, 1983:63), although bull and other elements often also serve as indicators that a depiction of the weather-god is intended. As to the origin of the lightning motif in the two- or three-forked forms observed in the preceding figures, Abou Assaf observes: "Aus den Darstellungen geht hervor, daß das zwei- oder dreizinkige Blitzsymbol in seiner letzten Form in der altbabylonischen Periode entwickelt wurde. Die besondere Verehrung des Wettergottes in jener Zeit brachte eine Bereicherung der Darstellungen des Blitzsymbols mit sich" (1983:56).

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[255] The unit of bow and quiver is normally depicted in such a schematic way (cf. **Figure 25**). Vanel incorrectly only identifies the sword: "Il n'a pas d'autre arme, à l'exception de la longue épée pendue à son côté" (1965:149).

5.2.4.3. The Weather-God standing on Mountains

The following two images represent weather-gods standing on stylized mountains. **Figure 79** is found on a hematite cylinder seal with unknown provenance, measuring 20 x 15 mm which has been dated to 1750 B.C. which corresponds to the Middle Bronze Age IIB, assigning the object to the chronological margin of the present study.[256] The seal is incised with a rather complex scene in which the weather-god standing on three mountains is of predominant interest for the present study. On the left side of the scene a male figure is standing facing to the right. He is wearing an oval crown and a long robe with rolled borders, while his one hand is extended toward a goddess standing in an *en face* position (cf. **Figure 72**).[257] Her hairstyle is intricately modeled and she is wearing a sort of cape around her shoulders to which a veil may be attached on the back which only covers her one leg. Besides these garments the goddess is naked and her navel and vaginal area are emphasized. While her one hand rests on her hip, the other one is offering a vase toward a god who is standing in a striding position on three mountains.[258] The god is wearing an oval pointed crown with a horn protruding to the front and a long curl on his back ending in a spiral: "Dieser [the pigtail] soll wohl seine jugendliche Schönheit und Manneskraft unterstreichen" (Winter, 1983:274). He has his one hand raised above his head in a striking position holding a club, although the club is of such small size that one realizes the abstraction of the gesture, since there is no enemy against whom the aggression could be directed. In his other hand he is holding a mace and another curved weapon which is not quite

Figure 79

[256] The cylinder seal has been published by Porada (1948:130, pl. 146:968) who classified it as Syrian belonging to the 'second Syrian group'. Cf. also Frankfort (1939:270, fig. 85) and Dijkstra (1991:129, pl. 2:1). Although the object is rather early for the chronological limits of the present study, the iconographic motif of the appearance of the weather-god continued to be in use for a long time in the Syro-Palestinian realm.

[257] Comments Winter about the origin of the semi-naked goddess: "Obwohl wie gesagt nackte Frauendarstellungen seit den Anfängen der Kunst im ganzen vorderasiatischen Raum belegt sind, ist der Ursprung dieser 'Frauenwelle' eindeutig in Syrien zu lokalisieren. Die frontale, plastisch-naturalistische Darstellung hat sich als Schöpfung der syrischen Kunst erwiesen" (1983:272).

[258] Normally the god is depicted as standing on two mountains. The occurrence of three mountains is somewhat rare (Dijkstra, 1991:129f.).

distinguishable. On the right side of the image two secondary scenes can be seen: at the bottom three figures are standing below a guilloche, while the upper corner is filled by a banquet scene of two seated figures filling vases from a large vase between them. The areas between the various figures are filled with symbolic elements: bull head birds, monkey, *ankh*-sign, etc. With Winter (1983:252f.) we would suggest that the scene in **Figure 79** represents the motif of the holy wedding ceremony whose origins must be searched for in a Syrian context which is supported by the appearance of a banquet scene on the cylinder seal. The figure in the robe with the rolled border has to be identified as the king or another royal representative who approaches the weather-, mountain-, or warrior-god on the mountains via the mediation of the semi-naked goddess.[259] Taking a Syrian context into consideration for the interpretation of the motif, the god on the three mountains who exhibits both warrior (weapons) and god of heaven (striding over the mountains) attributes could be identified with the Syrian Ba'al Zaphon, as Dijkstra has demonstrated for a seal depicting a similar god striding over two mountains (1991:130-137).[260]

Another cylinder seal which also may be of Syrian origin, shows a similar scene (**Figure 80**). The seal has been dated around 1200 B.C. and has no known provenance.[261] The scene depicts a male figure standing on the left with a rounded cap and a knee-long garment which is draped over the shoulders. He is holding a spear in an upright position, facing toward the right side. On the right side, two figures are standing facing toward the left. One is dressed in identical fashion to the first figure, while the other is

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[259] "Damit erfüllt auch die 'sich entschleiernde Göttin' u.a. die Funktion einer Mittlerin, die ich als Hauptaufgabe der 'nackten Göttin' bezeichnet habe" (Winter, 1983:280). One wonders if the image depicts the holy wedding motif or a mediation scene, or possibly both. Maybe Winter's association of the goddess with a mediation-role is induced by his denominational background.

[260] Frankfort was more cautious in the identification of the god: "It would be exceedingly rash to name this or any other divinity on the Syrian seals. He is a Weather-god, ... and he is identical with a Weather-god bestriding mountains" (1939:270). However, from topographical and literary texts, Dijkstra suggests the identification of Mt. Zaphon with Mt. Nan(n)i which appears in Hittite inscriptions explaining the god striding over two or three mountains. For the other mountain Mt. Ha(z)zi is mentioned in the inscriptions. When there are three mountains depicted, Mt. Pishaisha may be a possible candidate for its interpretation (Dijkstra, 1991:131, n. 24). Mt. Nan(n)i = Mt. Zaphon (cf. KTU 1.16.I.6-9) is the superior of the two, viz., three mountains: "If our suggestion is right to look for Mt. Nana [Nan(n)i] under the northern crest of the Nusairiye Mountains which tower high around the basin of the Nahr el-Kebir, it is a typical whim of history that this part of the mountain range today still is known as Gebel el-Quseir, the mountain of castles or bastions" (Dijkstra, 1991:137).

[261] Very little detail about the seal is given in the original publication (Ward, 1910:fig. 885).

Figure 80

wearing a long patterned dress which is draped over one shoulder leaving the other shoulder naked. The person is holding an object in his hand which cannot be identified.[262] Between the two figures on the right a horned capride is visible in a somewhat awkward (jumping?) position with its head turned backwards. The center of the scene is filled with a god standing on two high round-peaked mountains. He is proportionally smaller than the other figures, but his divine character becomes apparent from his posture and attributes. He is also dressed with the knee-long open dress, but is wearing a rounded cap with a rim. In his one hand he is holding a schematized club in an upright position, while the other hand is holding an ax, and not a Lotus flower as interpreted by Ward (1910:no. 885). Owing to Hittite influences, the god could be identified with the weather-god Teshub (Adad).

To our knowledge no representation of the god striding over the mountains has been found in the Palestinian region, and is limited to a more northern provenance and an earlier time period, except for the seal from Tell ed-Dab'a (Avaris) which has been discovered in 1979 and depicts a Syrian weather-god which has been identified by Porada as Ba'al Zaphon (Dijkstra, 1991:127-140; cf. Uehlinger, 1990:512-522, fig. 1).[263] It is interesting to note that the depiction of the mountains possibly links up with the topographical conditions of Syria during the 2nd millennium B.C. (cf. n. 260).

5.2.4.4. The Weather-God fighting the Snake

Similar scenes have already been presented with the class of seals displaying warrior attributes, e.g., **Figure 15** which shows Ninurta fighting Anzu, the horned snake with the bow. A variation of the theme is found in the following three images which portray the weather-god fighting the horned snake with lightning.

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[262] Ward originally identified the person as an attendant goddess, probably because the dress leaves the shoulder free. But similar dresses are worn by male figures as well in Syrian iconography (cf. Moortgat, 1940:no. 521).

[263] The seal was found "on the pavement of a Middle Kingdom palace (13th dynasty stratum G/4 second half of the 18th c. BC)" (Dijkstra, 1991:127).

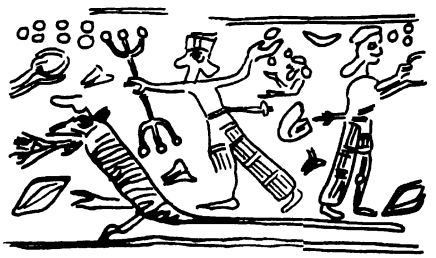

Figure 81

Figure 81 is found on a cylinder seal in the Louvre with unknown provenance. It is made from steatite in the Neo-Assyrian style, and can be dated to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C.[264] The scene on the seal depicts a horned snake or dragon with arms lying on the ground with its head raised. From its mouth fire is protruding. On its back in a running position, a god is depicted. Moortgat-Correns comments on the motif of the running god in the Neo-Assyrian cult: "Der rasende Laufschritt Ninurtas bei dem Kampf, 'der göttliche Schnell-Lauf', ist wohl der Anlaß zu einem Fest, das man zum Gedenken an seinen Sieg über Anzu in den Tempeln veranstaltet hat, wobei eben dieser Lauf im Mittelpunkt stand" (1988:126). The god is armed with a sword attached to his belt and has his one arm raised in a striking gesture, holding a round object in his hand.[265] With his other hand he is holding a double three-forked bundle of lightning attached to a long staff as his primary weapon. Behind the god a small figure is suspended in mid-air in a position of adoration. Facing the god a goddess is standing in front of the snake, also armed with a sword. She is holding a tambourine in her hand, extending it toward the god on the snake. In front of her head the seven-star is visible. Crescent and rhombe fill the remaining spaces of the image. As observed above, the god on the snake can be identified as Ninurta fighting the horned snake, while the goddess with the tambourine would be Ishtar (cf. **Figure 59**) which stands in close association to the warrior-god Ninurta (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:127). An interesting aspect of the seal is the fact that Ninurta is standing on the back of the Anzu snake, i.e., the animal he is attacking. One would normally expect him confronting it or standing on the back of his characteristic animal, the dragon, unless one identifies the snake as a poor rendering of the horned dragon on which Ninurta usually is depicted. But the animal clearly appears to be a snake, although it appears that no real confrontation is taking place.

Another depiction of the weather-god fighting the horned snake motif shows a very similar scene without the goddess. It is found on a cylinder seal without known provenance, made from serpentine, now in the

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[264] The seal has been published by Glock and Bull (1987:16, fig. 66).

[265] The object cannot be identified, but it almost appears like a stone, and has to be interpreted as some kind of a weapon.

possession of the BIF (**Figure 82**).[266] The seal is clearly Neo-Assyrian in style, and can also be dated to the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. The horned snake is lying on the ground with its front raised, while its one front leg is extended toward the front. From its mouth flames are coming forth, and its body is patterned probably indicating scales. The god on its back is in a running position while a cape attached to his neck is floating in the windstream created by his speed. His one arm is raised above his head, and the object he is holding with his hand appears to be an ax.[267] The other hand is brandishing the double three-forked bundle of lightning against the head of the snake. Behind the god, crescent, eight-pointed star, and rhombe fill the empty space. Again, the question has to be raised, if the god is fighting the horned snake on which he is running, i.e., which he is attacking from the back, or if both horned snake and god are attacking an imaginary enemy together.

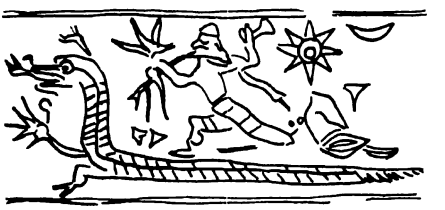

Figure 82

A final example which may contribute to the understanding of the motif group is found on a cylinder seal from Tell al-Reinah (**Figure 83**). The seal is made from serpentine or steatite, measuring 18 x 8 mm, and was found in a Late Assyrian shrine (area A, TR. 4423) dating from 800-612 B.C.[268] The dragon/snake is depicted in similar fashion as in **Figure 81** and **Figure 82**, i.e., snake-like body and head, but two front legs, except for the fact that its tail is curled up, and the god is not standing or running on its back. Above the tail an eight-pointed star is visible. Behind the snake a bearded god is visible in a standing (not in a running) position. He is wearing a long dress and is one hand is raised above his head, although no weapon is visible. The other hand is extended toward the front and he is brandishing three shafts of lightning against the snake. From this depiction we would assume that the god is attacking the animal from the back which would elucidate the two preceding images. Although there

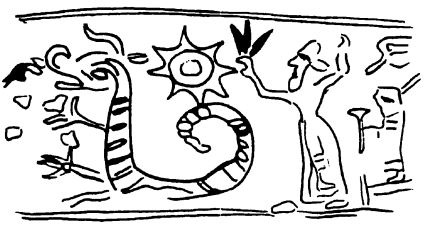

Figure 83

[266] The seal was published by Teissier (1984:168, fig. 224). No measurements are given.

[267] The unidentified object in Ninurta's hand in **Figure 81** should be interpreted along the same line.

[268] The seal was published by Parker (1975:38, no. 55, pl. 16:55).

are certain differences in the depiction of the motif[269] we would assume that the same iconographic theme, i.e., the fight of Ninurta against Anzu is depicted, and that the god can be portrayed as attacking from behind, viz., from behind in the running position on the back of the snake-dragon. However, as to the identification of the god, a question mark has to remain. While the warrior-god Ninurta is usually depicted in the context of the fight against the dragon, the bundle of lightning identify the gods on our three examples of that motif group as weather-gods for which Adad would be a more likely option. However, the affinity between Ninurta and Adad has been noted before. Moortgat-Correns comments with regard to the interchangeability of the two gods: "Kommen sie [Ninurta and Adad] aber getrennt vor und ohne ihre Tiere, sind sie nicht zu unterscheiden: Beide können eine Axt und einen Blitz halten, beide sind mit Pfeil und Bogen ausgerüstet und beide gleich gekleidet: man könnte geradezu an Zwillinge denken" (1988:128).[270]

5.2.4.5. The Weather-God in Arms

Figure 84 can be found on a limestone stela from Babylon which in accordance with its archaeological context can be dated from 823-811 B.C.[271] The design bears distinct traces of the Neo-Babylonian style, as is demonstrated in the intricately modeled dress (cf. Collon, 1987:168, no. 785; 1990:no. 21).[272] On the left of the scene a goddess is standing on a stylized mountain, facing to the right. She is wearing the high feathered crown, and an intricately ornamented dress reminiscent of shields with a belt around her waist. Her hair falls down on her neck, and there is a long curl (or streamer) on the side of her face. The goddess has raised her one

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269 E.g., the god is standing and not running, there is only a single bundle of lightning, and the god is not standing on the back of the snake.

270 Cf. our remarks to the cylinder seal shown in **Figure 21** on which an inscription can be found which includes the Old Assyrian *MAŠ* for which the meaning *'twin'* is attested (Hirsch *apud* Moortgat-Correns, 1988:129).

271 The stela has been published by Ward (1910:fig. 1273; cf. Contenau, 1931:1302-1302, fig. 823; and Pritchard, 1969b:313f., no. 533), and was found in the partly excavated Central Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II.

272 Comments Ward (1910:fig. 1273) on the circumstances of the find: "Among the monuments discovered by the German expedition to Babylon in 1899, was a limestone stele (fig. 1273), with four figures in bas-relief and a long inscription of Shamash-resh-usur, Viceroy of Suhi and Maer. ... This stele was probably carried by Nebuchadnezar, or some king of his dynasty, to Babylon as a trophy of victory, just as the stele with the Hammurabi Code was carried from Sippara to Susa by a Median conqueror. The land of Suhi was on the Middle-Euphrates, somewhere about the mouth of the river Habor". Ward assigns a date in the middle of the 8th century to the stela, but the context in which the object was found in Babylon requires the date given by Contenau (1931:1302f.).

Figure 84

hand in a gesture of blessing, while the other hand is extended toward the front, holding the tip of a bow and a ring. Above the bow an eight-pointed star is visible which distinguishes the bow as a divine weapon. In front of her face, the *marru* spade of Marduk and (possibly) the *qan tuppi* stylus of Nabû are visible. The male god is also standing on a stylized mountain in a similar posture as the goddess, facing to the right. The dress is identical to the one the female deity is wearing. He has a high feathered crown on his head and is sporting a long beard. He is holding a bundle of lightning in both hands which is of the double-forked type with the two prongs in a zigzag design.[273] One hand is in front of the body with a round object around the wrist, while the other hand is extended toward the front, also holding a ring together with the bundle of lightning. In front of the god a bearded worshipper is standing facing him. He is depicted in a lower position and proportionally smaller than the gods. He is dressed like an Assyrian king with a rectangular crown on which a globe is visible. His dress is not ornamented except for a striped border at the bottom. He is wearing a shoulder strap and a broad belt. His one hand is raised toward the god in a gesture of adoration, while the other hand is holding an oblong staff-like object which can be identified as a scepter, designating the figure as a royal adorant. Behind the worshipper another god is visible, also standing on a stylized mountain, but unfortunately, the top part of the figure has been damaged so that an identification is not possible. Above the worshipper, a crescent and (possibly) a winged sundisk are visible. The inscription next to the image seems to correspond with the depiction and identifies the deities as the weather-god Adad and Ishtar, while the adorant most probably portrays Shamash-resh-usur, the governor of Suhi, a region between the Babylonian and Assyrian domains which accounts for the presence of both Assyrian and Babylonian influences in the scene.

A similar scene is found on a votive cylinder seal from Beer-Sheba. It is made from chalcedony, measuring 38,3 x 15,4 mm (**Figure 85**). "The cylinder was found in the debris of Street 844 together with other votive objects" (Beck, 1973:56), and can thus only be dated in accordance with

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[273] Cf. the photograph in Pritchard (1969b:179, no. 533).

Figure 85

comparative material which would locate the seal at the end of the 8th century B.C. and 7th century B.C.[274] The incision technique seems to be somewhat exceptional, since it depicts various aspects of the scene in an outlined style and not in the normally expected bas relief technique commonly found on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals.[275] The god depicted on the right side of the scene is wearing a high feathered crown which is the "typical headdress of the Kassite gods of Babylonia, known from the kudurru of the second half of the second millennium B.C.E." (Beck, 1973:56). From this time onwards it is the standard headgear of the Babylonian and Assyrian gods (cf. **Figure 84**) and designates them as such, although heroes and mythological creatures can also wear similar crowns. The hairstyle is long and the end of the hair-do is indicated by two vertical lines behind the back of the god. The long dress of the god is ornamented with a pattern of vertically inserted curved lines which resemble four triple-edged semi-circles, probably reminiscent of the shield decoration found on the divine dresses in **Figure 84**.[276] The god is standing on a rectangular podium which is decorated with curved lines, probably an indication for a water-design, although the depiction is too schematic to be certain about this detail. His one hand is raised in a gesture of blessing, while the other is extended toward the front holding a long stick and a bundle of double-forked lightning, whereas the lightning does not necessarily seem to be attached to the staff.[277] The stela from Babylon discussed above shows a god with a similar staff on the right side of the

[274] The seal has been published by Beck (1973:56-60). The inscription of the seal has been published by Rainey (1973:61-70).

[275] Comments Beck: "This particular linear style is not found in any of the group-styles of the cylinder seals. In the Neo-Assyrian Linear Style of the ninth-eighth century, the figures are executed in low relief and certain details are incised. It would, therefore, seem that from the point of view of its technique, the Beer-sheba seal is an exception" (1973:56).

[276] Beck mentions a number of objects on which the dress decorations are similar to the one on the cylinder seal, but can clearly be identified as round shields, sometimes suspended on bands (1973:57).

[277] If one examines the photograph, one can realize that the bundle of lightning which is visible and the stick are slightly out of line with each other.

scene, although unfortunately the top part of the figure is broken off. A worshipper is standing on the ground facing the god. His long dress is not decorated except for a striped border at the bottom. He is wearing shoulder straps and a broad belt. On his head a high oval headdress can be seen.[278] Both his hands are extended toward the front in the familiar gestures of adoration (cf. e.g., **Figure 26**). His long hairdress is also terminated with two vertical lines. Behind the bearded worshipper similar lines as found on the podium are visible.[279] It is interesting to note that there are no divine or celestial symbols filling the open spaces between and around the two figures. The cylinder seal has an inscription which is incised in the positive which points to the fact that the seal was used a votive cylinder.[280] Following Rainey's transcription and translation (1973:61), the cuneiform inscription reads as follows:

1) *a-na* ^{d}*Ap(i)l(A)* - ^{d}*Adda* (IŠKUR) *bēli* (EN) *rabî* (GAL)
2) be!-lí-šú ^{I}Ri-mut-ilāni (DINGIR.MEŠ)
3) *mār*(DUMU) ^{Id}*Adad*(IŠKUR)-*id-ri*
4) ʾipuš(DÙ)-ma iqīš (BA-iš)

1) To Ap(i)l-Addu, the great lord
2) his lord, Rimūt-ilāni,
3) son of (H)adad-^{e}idri
4) made and donated (this cylinder seal)

While the inscription is constructed in the normal pattern of votive objects, the recipient of the gift is a less familiar deity, i.e., Ap(i)l-Addu which occurs as a theophoric element in Assyrian personal names (Rainey, 1973:61). Mention of this god is also made on the inscription found in the context of the stela from Babylon, viz., originally Suhi, and the deity may have been revered in this region along the middle Euphrates. As a whole the votive cylinder from Beer-Sheba exhibits a number of affinities to the stela from Babylon so that one would suspect a common background of the two objects, while the god depicted on the cylinder seal may be identified as the weather-god Adad or its local middle-Euphratian variation Ap(i)l-Addu. It stands to question, how this object came to the southern Judean desert, and probably has to be examined along the lines of the Assyrian administrative and military dominion in that region during the 8th century B.C. It certainly cannot be considered to be the product of a local glyptic workshop, but seems to have been imported.

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[278] For a similar headdress, cf. Pritchard (1969b:447) showing two royal captives of which one wears a similar crown. Cf. especially the priest in **Figure 21**.

[279] Maybe the seal cutter originally planned the depiction of another god in that space.

[280] Unfortunately one column of the inscription is missing on the drawing provided here. For a drawing of the complete inscription, cf. Rainey (1973:66, fig. 1).

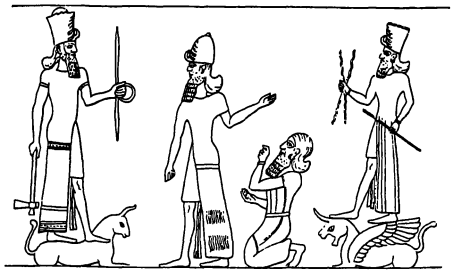

Figure 86

As a final example of the armed gods motif group a cylinder seal impression from Nippur in the Neo-Assyrian style can be seen (**Figure 86**). The impression is quite large measuring about 70 mm in height.[281] The date of the object has originally been assigned to the 13th century B.C., but the Neo-Assyrian style of the image[282] and the context of Esarhaddon's vassal treaties would rather point to a date in the 8th century B.C.[283] The inscription around the image is mainly illegible and only the name of the Assyrian deity Asshur can be made out with certainty (Wiseman, 1958b:19). The scene presented on the impression shows a worship scene with an initiation context. To the left a god is standing in a passant position on the back of a crouching gazelle. He is wearing a long dress which opens in the front revealing a knee-long skirt. The head is depicted in the typical Assyrian divine fashion with a high horned crown, a long plaited beard, and the hair reaching down to the neck. His one arm is hanging downwards holding an ax in a vertical position, while the other arm is extended toward the figure facing him, holding ring and rod with his hand. In front of him a male bearded figure is standing on the ground. His horned crown is different in that it is rounded at the top. Dressed in like manner as the god, he has no weapons or further attributes, and his one arm is pointing toward the back as if to introduce the person

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281 The impression has been published by Wiseman (1958b:19-22, fig. 6; cf. Collon, 1987:134, no. 560).

282 Our line drawing is a reconstruction of the seal, since no complete impression was found, but the various fragmented impressions allowed for a complete reconstruction.

283 The seal impression was found on the 7th century vassal treaties of Esarhaddon: "Early in the 7th century BC Esarhaddon of Assyria had vassal treaties drawn up to ensure the succession of his sons to the thrones of Assyria and Babylon. These treaties were written out on huge tablets on which were rolled three cylinder seals of different dates.... Recent studies have demonstrated convincingly that these are the seals of the god Assur which were kept not, as one would expect, in the temple but in the City Hall at Ashur and then in an annex of the later Nabu temple at Nimrud (presumably they were later moved to Nineveh)" (Collon, 1987:131). Moortgat-Correns comments on the erroneous original dating of the seal impression: "... wenn der kniende König nicht wäre, der wegen seiner Haltung entfernt an Tukulti-Ninurta I. auf seinem Symbolsockel erinnert, wäre niemand je auf die Idee gekommen, daß es sich um ein Siegel mittelassyrischer Zeit handeln würde. Die hohen, nach oben hin leicht ausladenden Hüte der beiden Götter ... sind typisch seit der zweiten Hälfte des 8. Jhs., und die Haltung der Hände des Königs ist ebenfalls neuassyrisch..." (1988:117, n. 3).

kneeling behind him. The kneeling male bearded figure is bareheaded with a long dress and his hands are in the typical gesture of adoration with the pointing thumb on the one hand, and the open palm on the other. Behind him another god is standing on a horned winged bull. He is depicted in like manner as the first god, but holds in one hand a rod or scepter, while the other is holding a crosswise double-forked bundle of lightning. We would suggest that the scene represents the introduction of an Assyrian prince or royal dignitary (the kneeling figure) by the king (the standing figure without any divine attributes) to the gods Adad (with ax, ring and rod) and the weather-god Ninurta (with the bundle of lightning) (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:118, n. 3),[284] although one also could opt for the reversed identification.

The motif of the weather-god in arms has primarily been represented by Assyrian motifs depicting Adad viz., local adaptations of that deity. The bundle of lightning, again, has been the demarcating criterion for the inclusion in the motif group, while all three images present scenes with a passive connotation, i.e., the meteorological weapon is not used to attack an enemy, but rather held in an emblematic manner.

5.2.4.6. The God in the Winged Sundisk with the Bow

A variation of the motif already discussed under the class displaying god of heaven attributes, represents the god in the winged sundisk with a bow, adding the warrior aspect to the imagery.

The relief on the famous 'broken obelisk' from Niniveh shows a personification of the winged sundisk, although no deity is visible on the scene (**Figure 87**). The image is about 30 cm in height, and has to be dated to the 10th century B.C.[285] The scene shows the Assyrian king (?)[286] holding ring and rod in one hand, while the other is open in a gesture of receiving

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[284] Collon has interpreted the scene as the "kneeling king being introduced by a minor god to Assur (?) while Adad looks on" (1987:134). However, the standing person does not display any divine attributes (neither characteristic animal nor weapons) except perhaps for his crown which is, however, clearly differentiated from the crowns of the gods, and is more likely to be a royal crown, although horns are visible which normally would indicate a deity (cf. Collon, 1987:134, no. 561). Wiseman (1958b:21) understands the seal to have belonged originally to the Kassite king Šagarakti-Šuriaš (1245-1233 B.C.). It was then captured by Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 B.C.) and re-cut for Assyrian purposes, but there is little evidence for such a process on the seal impression and the style appears rather homogenous and the scene well-balanced (cf. Collon, 1987:134).

[285] The obelisk is housed in the British Museum (BM 118898) and has been published *inter alia* in Pritchard (1969b:300, no. 440).

[286] Unfortunately, his face has been chipped off, not allowing for a closer identification of the figure.

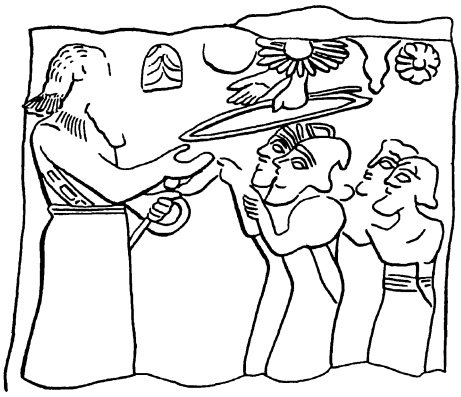

Figure 87

adoration. In front of him four enemies are visible in a submissive posture, having raised their hands in a gesture of adoration. They have a ring through their nose to which a rope is attached which is held by the king. However, the most interesting aspect of the image is the top part of the scene. Above the captives a winged sundisk is visible of which a more detailed drawing is provided in **Figure 88**.[287] The disk is not very prominent and surrounded by a tightly feathered pair of wings which almost appear as one closed semi-circle of wings. An inner and an outer row of feathers are visible. From the wings two hands are coming forth, one holding a bow as if to hand the weapon to the king,[288] while the other is extended with an open palm toward the king in a blessing gesture. Frankfort interprets the image as follows: "The original conception as expressed on the 'broken obelisk' is clearly this, that the god appears in the sky and extends his protection to the king. If we wish to explain the feathery mass concretely we might regard it as a rendering of clouds" (1939:211). Although there is no deity visible, the anthropomorphization of the winged sundisk is indicated by the two hands offering the bow the king. Comments Mayer-Opificius: "Es wird hier zum ersten Mal im assyrischen Bereich die Vostellung einer anthropomorphisierten Sonnenscheibe deutlich" (1984:199, cf. figs. 22-23). The god represented by the image is the Assyrian solar deity Šamaš, and not Asshur.[289] In presenting the bow to the king he is

Figure 88

[287] Unfortunately, the line-drawing provided by Keel (1972:196, fig. 297) is not very detailed with regard to the depiction of the sundisk.

[288] Together with the bow the hand is possibly holding an arrow.

[289] Asshur used to be the prime candidate for the interpretation of the god in the sundisk. E.g. Keel wrote in 1972 in commenting on the 'broken obelisk': "Den Bogen, den Assur als Gewitter- und Kriegsgott führt, überreicht er ... dem König. Die Inschrift erklärt, daß Assur und andere Götter 'ihre gewaltigen Waffen und ihren erhabenen Bogen seiner Herrscherhand' geschenkt hätten" (1972:197). However, the god has to be understood rather along the lines of a solar deity which would be found in Šamaš (Mayer-Opificius, 1984:199; cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:338).

aiding the monarch in warfare and the conquest of his enemies, thus transferring his military power to the ruler.

A more anthropomorphized variant of the motif can be found on a bronze disk with unknown provenance of which only the center image has been reproduced in the line drawing of **Figure 89**.[290] The bronze disk measures about 28 cm in diameter, and can be dated to the 9th century B.C. Before we describe the centerpiece which is of interest for the present motif group, the composition of the outer circle should be mentioned. Depicted on it are war scenes consisting of the following motifs:

> Die Kampfszenen bestehen jeweils aus zwei angreifenden Streitwagen und einem fliehenden, in Auflösung befindlichen feindlichen Wagen dazwischen; in den beiden etwas größeren oberen Zonenabschnitten flieht ein Reiterpaar auf den bildtrennenden Baum zu; in den unteren Abschnitten läuft die Kampfhandlung auf je einen stehenden Mann zu, dessen Helm einmal von einem Pfeil durchbohrt ist und dessen Hand flehend erhoben ist... (Calmeyer and Seidl, 1983:105f.).

The design is mostly Assyrian but exhibits also Urartian elements, e.g., the form of the chariots and the dress of their drivers which would indicate the presence of a depiction of a Urartian war scene (Calmeyer and Seidl, 1983:106f.). The center image consists of three figures: two atlants are kneeling on stylized mountains supporting the wings of a sundisk from which the upper body of a male god is emerging. Below the sundisk the bird's tail and the god's lower body are visible. He is standing on a pedestal which is, in like fashion as the mountains, patterned with a scale-design. The supporting figures are wearing horned crowns identifying them as divine or semi-divine beings. The figure is wearing a horned crown which is Urartian in design (Calmeyer and Seidl, 1984:108), and a long dress with a patterned border which seems to be wrapped around the figure. The god is holding a bow in front of him, while the other hand is raised and extended toward the front in a blessing gesture. The connection of the sundisk with the god with a bow appears to identify him as a solar deity with military connotations which is especially

Figure 89

[290] Allegedly the object stems from Eastern Anatolia, but the style is in tune with Assyrian workmanship of the 9th century B.C. The disk has been published by Calmeyer and Seidl (1983:1103-114).

apparent from the association of the motif with scenes of war and victory.[291] It may appear too simplistic to identify the god with Šamaš, taking the Urartian context and the added context into consideration, but a similar deity with solar connotations is to be expected (Calmeyer and Seidl, 1983:114).

A more active and aggressive depiction of the motif is found on the well-known glazed tile from Assur (**Figure 90**), measuring 28 x 46 x 8 cm, found in the Anu-Adad-Temple, dating to the time of Tikulti-Ninurta II. (890-884 B.C.).[292] The sundisk is depicted as encompassing the winged god completely, while there are rays or flames of fire depicted within the sun nimbus. The bearded god has a large feathered tail and a pair of large wings which go beyond the border of the sundisk. He is wearing a beard and a rounded crown. With his hand the god is holding a bow which he has stretched to its limits, pointing at an imaginary or at least not visible enemy, since the scene has been broken off on the right side. Below a chariot scene is visible of which only the head of the charioteer and the upper part of the horse's head is visible. Around the winged sundisk there are stylized clouds with raindrops suspended from the upper border below an inscription.[293] The association of the god with rain- clouds demonstrates his identification

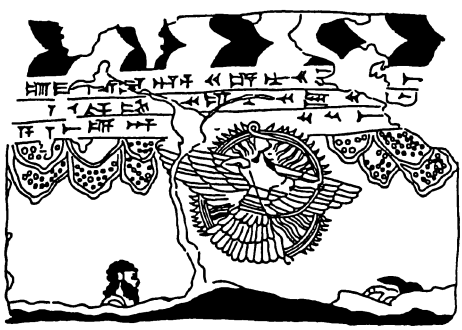

Figure 90

[291] Comment Callmeyer and Seidl: "Die auf beiden Scheiben [**Figure 89** and another similar object] ... dargestellte Szene ist eine Kontamination zweier wohlbekannter Elemente: des 'Mannes in der Flügelsonne' ... und der Flügelsonne (ohne Figur darin); in dieser Form ist sie bisher einzigartig. Erst recht unbekannt war bisher die Verbindung mit einer Siegesdarstellung" (1983:110). However, as **Figure 32**, a cylinder seal housed in the BIF shows, the motif also appear elsewhere though slightly modified, depicting the sun-god Šamaš standing on a horse in a similar context. Nevertheless, the additional element is constituted in the association of the sun-god with war scenes.

[292] The clay tile has been repeatedly published, e.g. Andrae (1923:13, pl. 8; Pritchard, 1969b:314, fig. 536; cf. Mayer-Opificius, 1984:fig. 25).

[293] Comments Frankfort on the significance of the clouds: "The rain clouds about the god are not a mere stage-property, or a sudden touch of landscape-painting. They are an essential attribute of the god, and remind us of the climatic difference between the north and south of Mesopotamia. In Babylonia rain serves at most to supply the nomadic shepherds with pasture, while agriculture is dependent upon irrigation. In Assyria however the country is mostly too hilly for irrigation by canals, and agriculture is dependent upon rain, which is much more plentiful there" (1939:212).

with a storm- and weather-deity, while the wide wings symbolize the dark thundering heaven. A rather intricate combination of warrior and god of heaven attributes is present in this scene. While there are definite weather-god connotations like thunder, lightning, rain-clouds, sundisk, etc., the atmospheric phenomena are directed against the enemies of the Assyrian king, thus creating a complex image of the god fighting from heaven with meteorological weapons (cf. Keel, 1972:196). As for the identification of the winged god in the sundisk, we would follow Mayer-Opificius who has convincingly shown that the god represents Šamaš rather than Asshur (cf. above n. 125).[294]

While in **Figure 90** the arrow pointed by the god with his bow at the enemies is not visible, **Figure 91** shows what kind of a projectile is used in the divine warfare. The depiction is found on a relief from Nimrud from the North-West Palace of Asshurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.).[295] Stylistically it is in line with the preceding specimen, and shows a god with the winged sundisk, whereas the sundisk is depicted as a ring which has been placed over his upper body. The god has a broad feathery tail and is bare-chested. He is wearing a horned crown and a long beard. Behind his back the top part of a quiver is visible. The god is aiming a bow toward the right side at an enemy, while bowstring and arrow are clearly distinguishable. The arrow ends in a three-forked point which resembles a flash of lightning. Thus the arrow-shooting sun- and weather-god Šamaš is using flashes of lightning as his arrows.[296]

Figure 91

The god with the winged sundisk (viz., the winged god in the

[294] Comments Mayer-Opificius on the function of Šamaš: "Aufgrund seines zweiten Aspekts, nämlich dem des Eid- und Rechtsbewahrers, ist Šamaš darauf bedacht, daß alle Verträge mit Assyrien eingehalten werden. Wenn dies nicht der Fall ist, kann das zu Kriegen führen, die der Sonnengott - auch aus dem zuletztgenannten Aspekt heraus verständlich - unterstützt. So nimmt es nicht wunder, daß der anthropomorph gebildete Šamaš zusammen mit König Tukulti-Ninurta II., wie man auf dem bereits erwähnten Gemälde **[Figure 90]** erkennen kann ..., auf die gemeinsamen Feinde schießt" (1984:200).

[295] The relief has been published by Budge (1914:pl. 18:1; cf. also Keel, 1972:196, fig. 296).

[296] For a broader context of the image, cf. Keel (1972:pl. 20) showing a relief from Nimrud on which Šamaš can be seen above the chariot of the king shooting his arrows into the direction of the king's enemies.

sundisk) motif armed with a bow in a shooting or more passive position is restricted to the Assyrian specimens presented here, which all stem from the 9th century B.C.

5.2.4.7. Miscellania

The final two examples of the group of objects displaying both warrior and god of heaven attributes, are rather marginal and do not constitute a major iconographic theme in their own right, but nevertheless demonstrate the mixed character of this group.

Figure 92 is found on relief K from Malatya[297] in Anatolia. It originated from the 'Gate of the Lions' and is of the Neo-Hittite style, dating it to the end of the 11th or beginning of the 10th century B.C.[298] On the right of the image a libation scene is portrayed, showing the king who is wearing a long dress and is holding a long curved stick, as he is pouring water from a small vase into a large vase on the ground. In front of him a god with a high conical horned crown is standing. The god is dressed with a short kilt and a short-sleeved top, while a curved sword (or the sheath of the sword) is attached to his belt.[299] His one hand is raised above his head in a striking position, holding a curved short weapon, while the other arm is extended toward the king holding a three-forked bundle of lightning in the form of a 'W' in his hand. Behind the god an inscription in Hittite hieroglyphs indicates the name of the god as Tarhunzas represented by a '^{d}W', which in its shape is reminiscent of the bundle of lightning in the god's hand. The scene is concluded by the depiction of a god standing on a chariot drawn by two bulls. The two gods are portrayed in like fashion, except that the god on the chariot is holding the reins of the bulls in the hand in which the other god is holding the bundle of lightning. Vanel comments: "La parfaite similitude des deux dieux et le fait que le signe '^{d}W' est écrit entre les deux font penser qu'il s'agit d'un seul et même dieu

Figure 92

297 Not to be confused with Maltaya where the relief with the procession of Assyrian gods has been found (cf. **Figure 74**).

298 The relief has been published by Delaporte (1940:pl. 24; cf. also Frankfort, 1969:pl. 133b). A number of elements in the depiction of the scene seem to be more in line with images of the 13th century B.C., but overall the given date seems preferable and the 13th century has to be regarded as a *terminus a quo* (Vanel, 1965:119f.).

299 Cf. the similarity to the god depicted in **Figure 77**.

représenté deux fois. Peut-être l'artiste a-t-il voulu faire comprendre que le dieu descend de son char ou y remonte avant ou après la cérémonie de la libation" (1965:120). The weather-god on the chariot in a warlike appearance is not so much to be seen in the context of actual warfare, but rather as an emblem similar to the bundle of lightning he is holding in the libation scene, nevertheless indicating the warrior connotation of the weather-god.[300]

For the last depiction we return to Egyptianizing iconography, although the object has been manufactured in Palestine. The motifs found on a rectangular plaque from Ta'anach which has been incised on both sides can be seen in **Figure 93**. The object comes from a Iron Age IIA context and has been dated from 1000-900 B.C.[301] The important detail which is of concern for the present study is the human figure depicted on both images. On the left scene the person is sitting on a throne with his hands raised toward the front which indicates royal connotations.[302] From his mouth and not from the forehead or crown, where one normally would expect it, an uraeus is emanating. A similar depiction can be seen on the other side of the plaque, where the figure is in a walking position with his hands upwardly extended toward both sides as if to support an object. While it is possible, that we are confronted with a portrayal of the king with solar attributes, the two images more likely represent depictions of the sun-god in two different forms, since the context of the scenes and similar images regularly indicates the presence of a deity rather than that of a human king, although there are certainly overlapping areas in Egyptian royal and divine solar iconography.[303] Consequently:

Figure 93

[300] "Il se pourrait, d'autre part, que le thème du dieu de l'orage debout sur un animal soit une réduction iconographique de celui du dieu au char" (Vanel, 1965:121). However, to identify the iconographic theme of the god on the char with the god on the animal seems to be too simplistic, since the latter is so widely distributed that one would expect a similar distribution for the chariot scene.

[301] Cf. Keel and Uehlinger (1992:154, fig. 159b).

[302] Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Die Ausführung des Thrones erinnert an Königsdarstellungen auf Skarabäen der ramessidischen Massenware; dort hält der König aber immer Geißel und Krummstab..." (1992:154).

[303] Cf. Keel and Uehlinger who discuss the various elements of the two images which contribute to an identification of the figure as a solar deity (1992:154).

> Der aus dem Mund hervorgehende Uräus schließlich charakterisiert die Erscheinung des Gottes als flammenden Gluthauch. Nicht eindeutig zu beantworten ist die Frage, ob es sich bei der schreitenden Gestalt von Abb. 159b [**Figure 93**] um dieselbe Gottheit in anderer Position handelt, oder ob hier eine Variante des Nebeneinanders von Hintergrund- und Vordergrundgottheit vorliegt. Die ausgebreiteten Arme erinnern an den königlichen Gestus des Himmelsstützens ...; da das Objekt des Stützens aber fehlt, geht es der Darstellung wohl vornehmlich um die belebende Rolle des Luftgottes. Die beiden Seiten der Platte dürften also die Wirkung des Sonnenlichts als herrscherliche Glut und als belebende Atemluft (vgl. Ps 104,29f.) darstellen (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:154f).

The aggressive character of the uraeus emanating from the mouth of the solar deity is, however, noticeable, and it stands to question, if the identical depiction of an iconographic element can symbolize two opposite entities, namely the burning wrath of the deity vs. the life-providing air.

5.2.5. Summary

A short summary of the various motif groups presented during this chapter may be helpful in organizing the source material into a meaningful unit. We have differentiated between three major classes of objects with their respective motif groups: the class of objects exhibiting warrior attributes with four motif groups, the objects displaying god of heaven attributes with nine motif groups, and finally the class of objects with mixed attributes consisting of seven motif groups.

(1) The smiting god: This motif group is represented primarily by depictions of the weather- and warrior gods Reshef and Ba'al, viz., the Egyptian Ba'al Seth. Most of the images stem from the end of the Late Bronze Age or beginning of the Iron Age, and are primarily found in the form of figurines and statuettes. The iconographic theme is only revitalized on a larger scale during the Persian period with the portrayal of Heracles as the smiting god. From our selection of ten objects, seven have an ascertained Syro-Palestinian archaeological background.

(2) Archer scenes: Gods in connection with archer scenes are predominantly found in the context of the mythological fight against the dragon and the snake. Out of the five objects, three have originated from Syro-Palestinian sites. While only three objects are depicting the mythological fight, we could have added a number of similar objects which were widely distributed in the form of fayence cylinder seals (cf. **Figure 15**). The majority of these objects are in the form of Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals.

(3) The god with the spear: The god fighting the horned snake with the spear is a particular early motif within our chronological delimitations with all three selected objects stemming from the end of the 2nd or the beginning

of the 1st millennium. Two out of three objects from Syro-Palestinian and Transjordan sites demonstrate the presence of the motif in this region.
(4) The god/dess in arms: This is a more passif motif within the depictions associated with the warrior class of objects. All images are found on Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., illustrating the popularity of this iconographic motif during this period, while only one out of seven objects originated in Syro-Palestine. The Assyrian gods Adad, Ninurta, and Ishtar are the prominent figures on these depictions.
(5) The god in the winged sundisk: A time span from the 10th to the 5th century B.C. and a wide distribution characterizes this motif group while the connotations are of a celestial and cosmic nature with solar emphasis, identifying the god in the winged sundisk usually with the sun-god Šamaš, whereas a tendency toward an increasing anthropomorphization could be observed. Two out of eight objects come from Syro-Palestine.
(6) The water-providing god: The water-providing god is usually found in similar contexts as the preceding motif group, i.e., in connection with the winged sundisk. While the image is derived from Middle-Babylonian and Middle-Assyrian times, it is found in Neo-Assyrian glyptic in the form of depictions of the water-god Ea or figures associated with him. There is no Syro-Palestinian representative of this motif group.
(7) The sacred palm tree: Although there is only one object from Syro-Palestine among this motif group, its presence in the region has been attested elsewhere (cf. Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:170-174). However, with regard to the flowing water, as represented on the majority of the selected images, it has to be ascribed to Assyrian and especially Neo-Assyrian iconography of the 9th to the 7th century B.C.
(8) The goddess in the star nimbus: This motif group is limited to depictions of the Neo-Assyrian goddess Ishtar who was closely associated with astral and celestial phenomena during that period. Four out of the seven selected objects come from Syro-Palestinian sites, although the workmanship is usually of a much rougher nature than their Neo-Assyrian counterparts.
(9) The celestial throne: This motif group again is restricted to the Neo-Assyrian glyptic of the 9th/8th centuries B.C., while there is an interesting association with the 'queen of heaven', viz., 'god of heaven' theme. One variant of the three images comes from 'Amman.
(10) The god/dess in creation: Gods or goddesses active in nature, or closely associated with nature are depicted in this group, while various deities (Ea, Adad, Ishtar, or the sun-god) may serve in this capacity. Especially the incised shell from Arad demonstrates the Syro-Palestinian

provenance of this motif group and its local interpretation. The objects cover a time period from the 13th to the 7th century B.C.

(11) The winged sphinx: The wide distribution of this motif group in Syro-Palestine has been attested before (e.g., Keel, 1977a:18-20; Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:288-290), while the originally Egyptian motif usually either serves as a throne of the deity, or in a more protective posture, as a guard for another object. However, the winged sphinx as a throne for the deity with the deity depicted as sitting on it, is rarely found in the region of Syro-Palestine. Six out of our eight objects stem from Syro-Palestinian sites ranging chronologically from the Iron Age I to the Persian period.

(12) The winged god/dess: Depictions of winged goddesses or gods are usually found in Syro-Palestine in Neo-Assyrian administrative centers from the Iron Age IIB (two out of three objects come from Syro-Palestine), i.e., the 8th or 7th century B.C. For the identification of the deity, the male god Ba'al serves as the most possible candidate, while the female winged goddess could be 'Astarte. The image seems to be limited to Northern Israelite and Phoenician workshops.

(13) Miscellania (god of heaven attributes): Under this motif group a depiction of an Assyrian cultic practice is found, i.e., the procession of the sun-god on his wagon through the land. The other object shows the famous procession of Neo-Assyrian gods from Maltaya which demonstrates sociomorphic and anthropomorphic realities rather than a comprehensive depiction of the Neo-Assyrian pantheon.

(14) The smiting god with the vegetation spear: The object representing this motif group is the famous 'Ba'al au foudre' dating from the Late Bronze Age, while his weapon can be identified as a vegetation spear, and not as a flash of lightning. The motif also reiterates the smiting god imagery.

(15) The smiting god with the bundle of lightning: The three images associated with this motif group depict weather-gods which can normally be identified with the Neo-Assyrian Adad or local variations of that deity. One object comes from a Northern Syrian site, another from Anatolia, while the third one is without known provenance.

(16) The weather-god standing on mountains: The god on mountains in our selection of motifs is chronologically limited to the beginning of the time period under question, while both objects selected for this study exhibit more northern influences, although no provenance is given. There appears to be no Syro-Palestinian representation of that motif.

(17) The weather-god fighting the snake: The group of three Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals dating from the 9th to the 7th centuries B.C. is of similar character as the archer scene motif group on which mythological struggles can be seen. All images depict the weather-god Ninurta or Adad fighting

the horned snake with the meteorological weapon, i.e., the bundle of lightning. One of the objects comes from Syro-Palestine.

(18) The weather-god in arms: This motif group consists of non-aggressive depictions of gods armed with the bundle of lightning. We have repeatedly established that the most important attribute for the identification of the weather god is the bundle of lightning which almost serves as an emblem and not as a weapon in this group. One of the three Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals, viz., cylinder seal impressions comes from Syro-Palestine, while they can be dated to the 9th/8th centuries B.C.

(19) The god in the winged sundisk with the bow: Returning to the motif of the god in the winged sundisk, images depicting armed gods in the sundisk are assembled for this motif group. Both passive and active bow scenes are present, while all four objects come from outside Syro-Palestine, i.e., Mesopotamia, and are dated to the 9th century B.C.

(20) Miscellania (warrior and god of heaven attributes): An image of the smiting weather-god with the bundle of lightning standing on a chariot from Anatolia, and the Egyptianizing depiction from Ta'anach showing a god from whose mouth an uraeus comes forth, conclude the selection of objects relevant for the purpose of the present study.

6. GOD AS WARRIOR AND AS GOD OF HEAVEN IN THE HEBREW PSALTER AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ICONOGRAPHY

The purpose of this chapter is to bring together the material presented up to now in the form of a comparison between the results of the exegetical (chapter 4) and iconographic (chapter 5) parts of this study. However, before the actual comparison between the two bodies of evidence can take place, it appears to be essential to outline the main issues pertaining to the comparative approach as applied in this study.

6.1. THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

Methodological considerations regarding the comparative method almost present itself, since the focus of this part lies on a comparative level. Historical research in any discipline has always been permeated by comparative approaches, and the comparative method as applied to ANE studies has to be understood as developed from and influenced by theoretical considerations relevant to other disciplines.[1]

Comparative methods have been employed by biblical scholars since the institution of ANE research,[2] while the focus of comparison has always been the "Old Testament with the cultural remains of the world outside it" (Malul, 1990:4). However, a systematic evaluation of this method and its underlying principles, has only begun to materialize within the last two decades.[3] The most concentrated work which has been published unto now

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1 For a summary of relevant literature, see Malul (1990:2, n. 4) and Talmon (1977:321, n. 5; 322, n. 6). It is, however, important to evaluate the comparative method against the specific requirement of ANE studies, and adapt it, where necessary.

2 Or even earlier: the multi-lingual lists from Mesopotamia clearly reveal comparative endeavours. The Middle Ages and Reformation eras were characterized by an increasing interest in comparative Semitic philology (Malul, 1990:3f.).

3 There have been earlier attempts to address the problem, but these were limited to pilot projects like the following: in 1966 Albright discussed the question of archaeology and historical analogy, and its application to the early biblical tradition. He rightly stated that "analogy is basically the application of the principle of resemblance or comparison" (1966:6), and went on to integrate the, until then, narrow field of "biblical archaeology" into the much broader archaeological context of the whole ANE (1966:13f.). However, as much as the present state of biblical studies owes to Albright's contribution, his

is Malul's *The Comparative Method in Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Legal Studies* (1990), and the present author is indebted to that work, since it summarizes the development of the issue in the course of the last two centuries. Although Malul's perspective comes from the realm of biblical legal studies and his deductions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the present writer, his work proved to be a valuable resource in discussing the comparative method. Since it is not our purpose to re-write the development of the comparative method, we will often refer to Malul's work in the course of the following paragraphs in which a comparison of Malul's approach with concepts of other adherents to the comparative method will be attempted.[4] The section will be concluded by an evaluation of the comparative method and the endeavor to adapt it to the requirements of the present study.

It may be important to clarify the terminology employed in this section: comparative method refers to the method of comparing biblical phenomena with other phenomena that occur in the whole realm of the ANE setting in general.[5] The comparisons have to work on the level of cultural systems without isolating individual phenomena from their respective cultural context. These comparisons may take place in different areas, encompassing a variety of approaches which are described below.

The underlying principles of the comparative method are based on the assumption that there are common characteristics between societies and cultures, which allow the researcher to make valid comparisons. With that notion it becomes obvious, that the comparative method as applied to biblical studies, finds its origin in the anthropological sciences, and more specifically, as Malul describes it, in "the philosophical debate between Diffusionists on the one hand, who explain the similarity of human phenomena as reflecting some underlying historical connection, and the Evolutionists on the other, who explain the similarity as deriving from the

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approach was deficient, since he compared individual phenomena occurring in different cultures instead of comparing cultural systems.

4 Besides Malul, other prominent authors discussing the comparative method, are: Finkelstein (1991), Greenspahn (1991), Hallo (1980; 1990; 1991), Machinist (1991), Mettinger (1990), Saggs (1991), Sandmel (1962), Smith (1969), and Talmon (1977).

5 This equation demonstrates a certain bias, namely, setting the Bible, respectively, the OT, versus the rest of the ANE. Malul criticizes this tendency toward a polarization of the OT against the rest of the ancient documents, pointing out the potential dangers of approaching a "subject matter with tendentiousness and *a priori* [my italics] notions" (1990:5f.). However, both in his theoretical and practical treatment of the comparative method, or the descriptive and prescriptive part, as he refers to it, Malul later on adheres to this equation himself. The points of reference for the present study correspond to this meaning of the term comparative method.

unity of the human mind..." (Malul, 1990:16). Without entering the realm of anthropological discussion, one realizes the affinity of the comparative method to anthropology, and the interrelation between the different sciences. However, in the past, there has been a general tendency to apply the comparative method to biblical studies without a critical evaluation of its axioms and their usefulness for biblical research.[6]

The interpretation of observed similarities and congruent phenomena between sociological entities, can be structured into two categories: (1) the comparative method on the grand scale[7] or the typological comparison; and (2) the historio-geographical comparative method or the historical comparison.[8] The development of the comparative method and its subsequent application to biblical studies, has removed the foundation for the isolationist's point of view who regards biblical history as having taken place in a vacuum.[9]

6.1.1. Typological Comparison

The typological comparison or comparative method on the grand scale is strongly based on the evolutionist assumption of the "fundamental unity of the human spirit" (Bloch *apud* Talmon, 1977:322), and furthermore, a general uniformity of man and his cultures. It primarily focuses on comparisons between cultures and societies that are geographically and chronologically far removed from each other. Similar features and phenomena are isolated, and interpreted as indicators for the asserted conformity of human behaviour. As applied to biblical studies, the typological comparison merits the following results.

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6 The question of methodological considerations with regard to the comparative method, has already been raised by Talmon: "Scholars seem to be less concerned about scrutinizing their methods in the light of the experience gathered from their 'field work' and seldom apply themselves to such basic questions as whether the comparative method intrinsically operates under the 'assumption of uniformity', as one school advocates, or if the aim should be 'a comparison of contrasts rather than a comparison of similarities', as another school would have it" (1977:321).

7 This term has been coined by M. Bloch in an anthropological study on the comparative method (1970:41).

8 Both categories are described by Malul (1990:13f.) and Talmon (1977:322-325), although the present study follows the terminology employed by Malul, namely typological comparison and historical comparison.

9 With this remark we are touching on the very core of the debate that surrounds the comparative method as applied to biblical or OT studies. It is the endeavor of biblical scholars to either demonstrate the uniqueness of the people of Israel in history, or to show that Israel's position among the nations of the ANE was by no means extraordinary.

> A biblical and/or ancient Near Eastern comparative scholar applying the typological approach uses evidence from one culture for illuminating another culture and understanding it better, or for demonstrating certain institutions and underlining certain beliefs and practices (Malul, 1990:17).

Although maybe legitimate when working within its limitations,[10] the typological comparison has features which lend themselves readily to abuse, and numerous criticisms have been adduced toward an uninformed application of it to biblical phenomena.[11] The main criticism which has to be voiced against the typological comparison is the dubiousness of its claimed uniformity of cultures and societies.[12] The notion of the historio-cultural context is ignored, making it evident that "random comparison without reference to the general structure and profile of the overall scale of values and beliefs of the societies involved, can only mar and distort" (Talmon, 1977:324). To separate a phenomenon from its historical and chronological context, can only lead to erroneous conclusions. Thus the frame of reference for any comparison has to be the cultural system. The typological comparison will be of minor concern for the methodology of the present study, and its application does not appear to be valid for the comparative method employed in this study.

6.1.2. Historical Comparison

The development of ANE archaeology and the accumulation of extra-biblical literature has promoted the scholarly interest in the second category of the comparative method, the historical comparison. One can detect the same interdisciplinary affinities to the anthropological sciences as for the typological comparison (Talmon, 1977:325), although the historical comparison seems to have been more suitable for the realm of biblical studies than the typological comparison.

The main notion of the historical comparison is the diffusionist assumption of a "historical connection or common tradition between the compared societies" (Malul, 1990:14). As an explanation for this historical

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[10] Malul limits the relevance of the typological comparison to a mere "intellectual exercise on a theoretical level, carried out for pure heuristic purposes..." (1990:18).

[11] Talmon demonstrates the fallacies of the typological comparison with reference to J. G. Frazer's multi-volume work *Folklore in the Old Testament*, published in 1918. The size of this work demonstrates the fact that the quantity of detected similarities and agreements between two cultures is proportional to the degree of isolation of these phenomena from their respective cultural and historical context. For further examples of the typological comparison, see Malul (1990:17f., n. 12).

[12] Historically, this approach reflects the impact of the evolutionist theory on the social sciences and also modern critical OT studies in the former part of our century (Talmon, 1977:323).

connection, a degree of influence of one culture upon the other, or a common historical source, could be adduced. In considering these axioms, it becomes apparent, that the historical comparison works within a geographical and chronological framework. Only cultures that share the same cultural context or the same "historical stream",[13] based on a geographical and chronological congruity, can be the object of a valid comparison.[14]

Interest in the historical comparison during the recent decades was distinctly promoted by the great archaeological discoveries of this century, verifying the notion of Israel being part of the ANE historical stream.[15] This external data contributed to a wealth of publications which demonstrated parallels between the cultural setting of Israel and that of their neighbours.[16] However, this has led a number of scholars to pronounce a cautious note, warning against the danger of "parallelomania", i.e., the abuse of the historical comparison as an ever-ready tool to solve enigmatic passages.[17] These remarks produced a fruitful and still ongoing discussion about the

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[13] This definition of the comparative method according to the historical comparison follows M. J. Herskovitz (*apud* Talmon, 1977:326).

[14] The relative importance of time and place, has been the subject of an ongoing discussion, and the relevant methodological considerations are far-reaching. Talmon, states as a general criterion that "sources closer to the Old Testament in time take pride of place over considerations of geographic proximity; because of the latter, though, even features observed in relatively late sources may retain traces of earlier common cultural conditions. Thus *date* appears to be more important than *place* [his italics]" (1977:325). The validity of that statement will concern us below.

[15] Says Talmon: "A synoptic view of the ever increasing information brought to light from the archives of Ugarit, Nuzu, Mari and the Hittite lands made it exceedingly clear that in the two millennia before the common era the peoples of the ANE indeed lived within a 'historic stream' created and maintained by the geographic-historical continuity which made possible a steady transfer and mutual emulation of civilizational and cultural achievements" (1977:326).

[16] Immediately the contributions of W. F. Albright come to mind who "has never ceased to provide startling parallels which have promised to solve old cruces and to open new vistas of interpretation" (Hallo, 1990:2), although few current biblical scholars receive these parallels with the same enthusiasm displayed earlier on.

[17] Although Sandmel's study deals primarily with the literature of early rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, his introduction and definition of the term "parallelomania" are nevertheless equally pertinent to the literature of the OT, and have been taken as such: "We might for our purposes define parallelomania as that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction" (Sandmel, 1962:1). It would, however, be simplistic, to equate the whole realm of the historical comparison with "parallelomania". It rather shows the necessity of a critical evaluation of the comparative method.

validity and the methods involved in the historical comparison as a category of the comparative method.

Hallo points out another interesting development which, in his opinion, has contributed to the increasing stimulus for comparative studies. He describes the unsatisfactory state of the documentary hypothesis, and the resulting endeavors to find new approaches to the task of analyzing the biblical text. Furthermore, the present state of the literary-critical study of the Bible "has switched the focus of interpretation to the text as received, normally in its Massoretic shape..." (1990:1). In contrast to this lamentable state, the work done along the lines of the comparative method seems to offer more satisfactory results for biblical scholarship, since it provides an empirical model for biblical interpretation.[18] The validity of Hallo's observation seems to be supportable, since it captures the general tendencies of modern biblical scholarship accurately.

The present study will engage in the application of the comparative method from the perspective of the historical comparison, although not without critically qualifying the methods employed. In order to evaluate the comparative method and adapt it to the present study, it is first necessary to survey the different applications of the comparative method.

6.1.3. Application of the Comparative Method

The past two decades have produced a more fruitful discussion about a balanced approach to the comparative method, and the warning of parallelomania sounded by S. Sandmel has been reiterated repeatedly by various scholars. What has become apparent is the fact that the comparative method, like any other scientific approach, is not free from the danger of scholarly bias, i.e., the tendency to use the comparative method selectively or one-directional, in order to substantiate an *a priori* hypothesis. Theoretically, one could adduce a mere academic interest in the occurrence of a similar phenomenon in two or more different cultural contexts, but the practical test and a survey of comparative literature shows that this idealistic approach is restricted to theory. The notion that there is a comparative method which is objective in its application, has to be challenged from the outset:

> ... the comparative scholar adduces a parallel phenomenon for a specific purpose - either to prove something or to emphasize a certain point. It could safely be said that this distinction between what may be called "objective" comparative activities on

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[18] Hallo sounds a similar note when he quotes Kitchen and other scholars who "'are skeptical of traditional literary-critical methods ... preferring objective comparative data to unverifiable hypotheses'" (Kitchen *apud* Hallo, 1980:3).

> the one hand, and "purposeful" activities on the other, holds true only theoretically. In reality every "objective" comparative activity becomes "purposeful" when the comparative scholar puts to the test his newly-formed working hypotheses, rejects or accepts them (Malul, 1990:21f.).[19]

Having said that, one immediately faces the question of what purpose the comparative method serves, and how this purpose is being reached. Malul has isolated six trends in the application of the comparative method which can serve as a valid summary for our discussion:

(1) Proof for a historical connection between the OT and the ANE on the basis of a similar phenomenon or literary work that is being compared.[20]

(2) The use of external comparative material in order to enhance the understanding of enigmatic sources, e.g., the elucidating of OT passages through the help of cognate languages.[21]

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[19] Cf. also Greenspahn's editorial introduction to the *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*, where he refers to the comparative method as a tool in the debate of interest between Jewish and Christian authors: "If much of the impetus for seeking parallels between biblical and ANE cultures is not entirely objective, the response that its practitioners are trying to minimize the Bible's Jewish value also echoes a long-standing Jewish perception of Christian interest in the Bible" (1991:8). Pardee, in reviewing Hallo's co-edited volume *Scripture in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method* (1980), adds a more general criticism of the application of the comparative method: "For the problem with the traditional comparative approach is not that it compares, but that it sometimes begins comparing with the distant rather than with the proximate, or that it does not nuance its use of comparisons with distant entities, or that it is selective, choosing only those comparisons which favor a certain thesis" (1985:221).

[20] Malul devotes a whole chapter to the nature and type of the connection between the OT and the ANE: as to the nature of the connection, he distinguishes between the literary/written level [e.g., borrowing from some literary source] and the reality level [i.e., occurrence of a historical connection, because the biblical writer was part of the general culture of the ANE], although the two are not mutually exclusive, and rather complement each other. The type of connection can be on a variety of levels: (1) a direct connection; (2) a mediated connection, i.e., source A borrows indirectly from source C via source B; (3) a common source; and (4) common tradition (1990:87-91). It seems, however, inconsistent with his otherwise balanced approach, when Malul comes to the conclusion with respect to the direction of borrowing in case of a direct connection that "the chronological precedence of the ancient Near Eastern sources automatically determines them as the contributor, and the Old Testament as the borrower" (1990:89f.). This presumed automatic direction of borrowing will concern us below during the evaluative remarks on the comparative method.

[21] This seems to be by far the most common purpose for the application of the comparative method, and scholars like M. Dahood come readily to mind, who has used (and sometimes abused) this method with regard to the Ugaritic evidence in comparison to the OT. For more detailed examples of comparative literature of this category, see Malul (1990:23-25) and Talmon (1977:329-332).

(3) Especially in connection with the Patriarchal traditions, the trend of proving the biblical material on the basis of comparative external evidence, has become apparent.[22]
(4) The use of comparative material in aid of dating the biblical evidence. This trend also applies specifically to the Patriarchal traditions.[23]
(5) The trend of using the comparative method in order to indicate the contrasts and differences between the OT and the ANE. In contrasting the different cultures with each other, the uniqueness of one source - usually the OT - is emphasized. This trend will especially concern us below.[24]
(6) As a last use of the comparative method, we can refer to the above mentioned danger of parallelomania. Numerous comparisons are listed without further qualification as to how the scholar has arrived at the conclusion of similarity, and why he adduces this particular comparison at all.[25]
All these trends have in common that they are "based on the *a priori* [my italics] assumption of a historical connection or a common tradition between the Old Testament and the outside world" (Malul, 1990:25). This assumption is, of course, justified and can easily be demonstrated on the basis of historical data. However, if one surveys the abundant literature that employs the comparative method, one realizes that there is a lack of "clearly defined and objective criteria for its application and for a judicious explanation of the parallelisms, their meanings and implications" (Malul, 1990:35).
After having discussed the underlying theoretical assumptions pertinent to the comparative method, it seems to be appropriate to consider the practical approaches of this method, i.e., the way the comparative student goes about his task.

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[22] This trend has also been promoted in the form of a negative proof, as an *argumentio e silentu*, i.e., if there is no external evidence which contradicts the Patriarchal narratives, then they can be accepted as historically valid.

[23] Cf. Millard (1980:43-58).

[24] Cf. the article of P. Machinist who discusses the history of the distinctiveness-of-Israel discussion and examines the biblical distinctiveness passages (1991:421-427). Malul distinguishes two groups of scholars who follow this trend: (1) the fundamentalists/pseudorthodox, mainly for apologetic purposes; and (2) scholars who point out contrasts and differences between Israel and its neighbours working from the assumption of a common cultural context of the ANE of which Israel was part.

[25] This approach seems rather futile, since it limits itself to the tedious task of cataloging similarities; Malul refers to it also as "inventorial approach" or "parallel hunting" (1990:32, n. 22).

6.1.3.1. Comparative Approach

This has been the most widely used approach to the comparative method. Nevertheless, it has also drawn the strongest criticism throughout the history of its application.[26] The comparative approach to the comparative method according to our definition stresses the parallels and similarities found between two or more different sources. The motivation behind this comparison might be manifold, and a number of uses and misuses have been discussed above, but it has to be pointed out that this approach in itself does not automatically lead to a misapplication, and only the unqualified use of it can lead to misrepresentations.

Ideally, comparisons will take place in the form of an equation, i.e., a certain epigraphic or non-epigraphic phenomenon in any one of the cultures of the ANE, is compared with a similar or parallel phenomenon in another culture.[27] However, in the realm of biblical studies, the bias toward Israelite culture on the one side of the equation, over against the rest of the ANE on the other side, seems to be appropriate, since it is the main focus for the biblical scholar.

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[26] Malul mentions various criticisms which can be summarized as follows: (1) the comparative scholar often readily turns to extra-biblical material without first exhausting the internal biblical evidence. This criticism has especially been adduced by S. Talmon (1977) who differentiates between an atomistic and a holistic approach, whereas atomistic would refer to the tendency to isolate phenomena from their immediate and wider cultural, i.e., biblical, context and compare them with similar phenomena of the external source (1977:329). In contrast, a holistic approach would first try to understand the biblical phenomenon in its immediate and wider biblical contexts, its *Sitz im Leben*. (2) The notion of comparative scholars to set the biblical culture in contrast with the cultures of its surrounding neighbours, in order to underline the uniqueness of Israel in the ANE. This criticism actually applies to the contrastive approach (see below). (3) The reconstruction of enigmatic phenomena in the OT on the basis of external theoretical models; underlying this misuse of the comparative method is a uniformalism that often cannot be substantiated by the external data. (4) Reconstruction of similarities in order to make a biblical phenomenon conform to the external source. (5) The comparison of incomparables, e.g., comparing a biblical text of one genre with extra-biblical texts of a different genre. (6) The dating of biblical traditions on the basis of extra-biblical material which originates from a different age. It has to be pointed out that these criticisms do not only apply to the comparative approach but also to the contrastive and contextual approaches which are described below.

[27] The almost legendary lectures of F. Delitzsch in 1902 entitled *Babel und Bibel* can serve as a good illustration of the comparative method and also to a certain extent of the misapplication of the method. Finkelstein has reviewed the evidence adduced by Delitzsch, and has produced a more moderate comparative study on the Hebrew and Babylonian religious mind (1991:355-380, esp. 356-358).

Parallels can be adduced on various levels, including similarities of literary or stylistic devices, e.g., genre, metaphor,[28] imagery, but also similarities on a merely lexicographic and grammatical level. Another, broader, category of comparison may be similarities of customs, ideas, symbolic acts, etc. One realizes that the limitations for the application of the comparative approach are not easily defined, which serves as an explanation as to why its misuse is so abundant. The problem does not seem to lie with the specific parallel, but rather with an over-emphasis of parallels[29] and the lack of clearly defined criteria for the application of the comparative approach.

6.1.3.2. Contrastive Approach

The contrastive approach to the comparative method centers around the differences and contrasts between the cultures of the ANE on the one hand, and the biblical OT culture on the other. It can be seen as a complementary development to the comparative approach[30] and is based on the notion that "a comparative approach that is truly objective must be broad enough to embrace the possibility of a negative comparison, i.e., a contrast" (Hallo, 1991:314). Contrasts may be used to illuminate an unfamiliar biblical phenomenon in the same way as a comparative parallel may enhance the understanding of that phenomenon.[31]

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[28] This is, of course, of special concern for the present study. Says Hallo: "Biblical literature is rich in metaphor. But the precise import of its graphic allusions can sometimes be recovered only in the light of the comparative data, both textual and artifactual" (1990:7).

[29] Scholars, "such as H. W. F. Saggs and Morton Smith, who see its [Israel's] ideas as typical of the ancient Near East" (Greenspahn, 1991:9), will readily characterize the culture of Israel as representative for its historical and geographical context.

[30] Hallo who strongly advocated the contrastive approach, describes its development from the comparative approach: "...scholars such as Yehezkel Kaufmann and Frank Cross have always preferred the contrastive method, and I [W. W. Hallo] have myself long argued for a 'contrastive approach', that is to say, for the need to modify the strictly comparative approach by paying equal attention to possible contrasts between biblical phenomena and their Near Eastern counterparts, whether in the realm of institutions or literary formulations" (1990:2). Cf. also Saggs who opts for an abolishment of the biased toward Israelite religion in comparative studies (1978:1-29).

[31] As a representative study for the contrastive approach, Hallo's discussion of Israel's cultic calendar may be taken: "My thesis in brief is this: the cultic calendar of ancient Mesopotamia, like its civil calendar, was largely tied to the phases of the moon, and not at all to the week (or: a week); in Israel, the cultic calendar was only minimally connected to lunar phases, whereas the sabbatical cycle was all-important" (1991:315). He comes to some interesting conclusions: "... the uniquely biblical conception of the week and the sabbatical cycle stands out equally by virtue of its pervasiveness in biblical laws and letters, as by its absence from the surrounding Near East" (1991:325). His final note is even more far-reaching: "Here, then, two of the great contrasts between biblical

An issue closely related to the contrastive approach is the question of the distinctiveness or uniqueness of the nation of Israel against the remaining nations of the ANE. Since the contrastive approach to the comparative method in the realm of biblical studies stresses the distinctiveness of a biblical institution against its Near Eastern counterparts, the contrastive approach has been charged with being the vehicle of "pseudorthodox" (Smith, 1969:32ff.) tendencies, trying to substantiate the superiority of ancient Israelite culture. Again, the problem is not directly dependent on the contrastive approach in itself, but on the deductions that are made on the basis of the contrasts.[32]

6.1.3.3. Contextual Approach

Out of the apparent dialectic dichotomy between comparative and contrastive approach, W. W. Hallo advanced as a synthesis the contextual approach, which embraces both parallels and contrasts in the comparison of ANE sources. The intention of the contextual approach is "not to repudiate the comparative approach, but to define it, refine it and broaden it, notably by wedding it to the 'contrastive approach'" (1980:2). Since the contrastive approach assumes the above discussed historical connection of Israel's cultural heritage with the remainder of the ANE cultures, it operates from this background, pointing out the differences and similarities between the compatible sources. Compatibility is defined on literary grounds as "including the entire Near Eastern literary milieu to the extent that it can be argued to have had any conceivable impact on the biblical formulation" (Hallo, 1980:2).[33]

Mention should be made of S. Talmon's discussion of the comparative method in which he strongly argues for a contextual approach, or in his terminology a holistic approach, but from an interesting perspective. He

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Israel and its Near Eastern matrix meet: sabbatical cycles versus lunar calendars, and divine versus royal authority" (1990:326).

[32] The notion of uniqueness cannot be excluded *a priori*, but before one arrives at such a conclusion, certain criteria have to be met: "One has first to prove the *possibility of influence or connection* [his italics], and only then may he proceed to check the significance of the similarities and differences on the basis of the test for coincidence *versus* [his italics] uniqueness" (Malul, 1990:97).

[33] Recently Hallo broadened the criteria in adding the historical context to the literary context. He furthermore identified the purpose of the contextual approach: "It is not to find the key to every biblical phenomenon in some ancient Near Eastern precedent, but rather to silhouette the biblical text against its wider literary and cultural environment and thus to arrive at a proper assessment of the extent to which the biblical evidence reflects that environment or, on the contrary, is distinctive and innovative over against it" (1990:3).

stresses the importance of first comparing the biblical phenomenon under question within the immediate and wider biblical context. Only when this procedure has not yielded satisfactory results, the should biblical scholar turn to extra-biblical material for the illumination of the source.[34] With this line of argument, Talmon creates what one could call a hierarchy of comparison in which the biblical text always precedes any other source.[35] To summarize: the appropriate execution of the contrastive method seems to be ensured when the relationship between parallel and contrast is balanced; then a valid overall context for the biblical text can be provided (Hallo, 1990:3).

6.1.4. Evaluation of the Comparative Method

In the course of the foregoing discussion it has become obvious that the comparative method is by no means an altogether objective tool with which the biblical scholar can impartially unlock the enigmas of the biblical text.[36] Very often the application of the comparative method reveals much about the scholar's personal presuppositions, and, what was intended to be a method of research, sometimes turns out to be a more or less academic confession of faith.[37] The present writer does not want to exclude himself

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[34] Concludes Talmon: "The interpretation of biblical features - whether of a socio-political, cultic, general-cultural or literary nature - with the help of inner-biblical parallels should always precede the comparison with extra-biblical materials. In the evaluation of a social phenomenon, attention should be paid to its function in the developing structure of the Israelite body politic before one engages in the comparisons with parallel phenomena in other societies" (1977:356). However, since there is only a limited amount of data to be gleaned from the biblical texts, the recourse to extra-biblical material offers itself readily, thus enabling the researcher to understand how certain ideas were received in differing cultures.

[35] In this respect Talmon has been criticized by Malul: "... Talmon's approach echoes the invalid assumption that the biblical corpus is a monolithic and unified work from the point of view of both its language and lexicon, as well as the ideologies and views reflected in it, so that one may freely resort to any biblical evidence from any genre or period for the elucidation of problems existing in other genres and periods" (1990:46). The validity of this criticism, however, may be proportional to the scholar's personal view of the unity of the biblical literature.

[36] Says Greenspahn in his introduction to the *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*: "Whether couched in religious, philosophical, or even social scientific terms, therefore, the issues discussed in the essays collected here are not simply academic.... As we have seen, the vested interests of both Christians and Jews are at stake in many of the esoteric arguments on these seemingly pedantic points. Nor are their authors entirely disinterested parties, even if the debates are sometimes cloaked in the rhetoric of archeology or linguistics and defended on the basis of supposedly objective, 'external' evidence" (1991:10).

[37] This refers to scholars from all schools of thought.

from that tendency, but it seems to be important to notice the impact a personal point of view has on the course of the research. This is by no means to say that the comparative method should be abandoned or be classified as an academic entertainment, since it still holds true that "much of the most exciting work in the field [of modern biblical scholarship] has been derived from outside its own immediate limits, i.e., from the juxtaposition of the biblical text with other literature and with the epigraphic discoveries made both on the soil of the Holy Land and throughout the Near East" (Hallo, 1990:1). Nevertheless, it appears to be appropriate to clarify some aspects of the comparative method that are pertinent for the present study in an evaluative manner.

(1) The motivation of the comparative approach to this study is the attempt to understand a certain type of biblical language, i.e., metaphorical language, in the context of the biblical text itself **and** also against its ANE background. With that it is said that the culture of Israel is understood as being an integral part of the ANE, a member of its "historical stream".[38]

(2) The point of departure for the comparative procedure is the biblical text, but the equation of comparison has to be recognized as being bi-directional,[39] i.e., the notion of a reciprocal influence of biblical and extra-biblical sources cannot be excluded *a priori*.[40] This would correspond to the concept of applying the same standards to the biblical text as to the rest of the ANE documents.[41]

(3) The nature of comparison can be both comparative and contrastive, comprising similarities as well as differences which brings us to the question of the contextual approach. Talmon's appeal for an intra-biblical holistic approach to the comparative question must be acknowledged, but the comparison has to go beyond that, including a wider context of

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[38] According to M. Smith's definition the comparative approach has been charged with being "pseudorthodox" (1969:21), but this terminology seems a label too easily applied so that it cannot characterize this complex field of biblical studies sufficiently.

[39] Mathematically, the relationship between source A and source B could be expressed by $A<B$, $A>B$, $A\sim B$, $A=B$, and $A\neq B$ (Hallo, 1991:314).

[40] Malul modifies his statement that one "should not consider the possibility of a reverse direction of borrowing" (1990:90), to: "... this possibility [i.e., ancient Near Eastern source borrowing from biblical source] must be taken into consideration by any serious scholar who approaches his subject matter with impartiality" (1990:90). Hallo mentions a number of interesting phenomena where the possibility of this kind of influence can be demonstrated (1990:6).

[41] "We should neither exempt biblical literature from the standards applied to other ancient Near Eastern literatures, nor subject it to standards demanded nowhere else" (Hallo, 1973:4).

comparisons. Thus a hierarchy of contexts[42] valid for comparative purposes should be created, in which the comparative scholar proceeds from the closest contexts to the more distant ones.
(4) The question of the "time and place gap" (Malul, 1990:101) between the biblical and the ANE source has to be answered in terms of the external evidence that is available and which proves the point of contact between the respective cultures. Generally speaking there appears to be enough extra-biblical data which would support a Bronze **and** Iron Age corroboration between Israel and the ANE.[43] However, although "corroboration by itself does not constitute *proof* [his italics] of the existence of connection" (Malul, 1990:111), it nevertheless increases the probability of a valid comparison. Only if the corroboration is a possible one, the parallels and contrasts can be evaluated in terms of "coincidence *versus* uniqueness" (Malul, 1990:112), and then the question of dependence or independence can be answered.

6.2. COMPARISON OF TEXTUAL AND ICONOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Any comparison and contrast established in the following section is restricted by two factors: (1) the selection of texts for the present study; and (2) the selection of iconographic objects for the present study. Since none of these two constituents have been approached from a comprehensive perspective, it stands without question that the resulting picture will lack

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[42] Pardee argued for such a hierarchy of contexts: "It seems to me that a frankly detailed hierarchy of contexts, such as those which have been attempted for philological and text-critical comparisons ... would be useful; and this hierarchy would have to be constructed on several levels, including at least geographical and chronological contexts..." (1985:221).

[43] Smith, an adamant defender of the source analysis, has accordingly solved the question of the time and place gap by ascribing an exclusively Iron Age (including the Persian period) and Mediterranean background to the biblical text: "This is the outline of Israelite literature, and it belongs part and parcel, soul as well as body, to the Iron Age and to the Mediterranean, not to the Mesopotamian world" (1969:35). Any Assyriologist will question the validity of that statement, and if one reads further on in Smith's rather polemic article, one gets the impression that the present state of OT studies in 1969 is out-dated by now, perhaps, even was then: "For those tasks [i.e., recognizing the relationship between Israelite culture and Iron Age Mediterranean world] students will rely not only on the source analysis and dating worked out by the scholars of the nineteenth century, but also on the great achievements of the past generation..." (1969:35). As much as it is appropriate to integrate the findings of former scholar's generations into modern research, it becomes increasingly important to advance biblical studies into new avenues, even if it sometimes means, to shake at the foundations of traditionalized hypotheses.

completeness. However, throughout the study we have endeavoured to make the motivation for the selection of the texts and objects as transparent as possible, subjecting them to certain governing principles,[44] in order to achieve a broad and verifiable basis for the comparative approach.
Since the point of reference for the comparative task is the biblical text, we will depart from the eight psalms we have studied in chapter 4 and try to link them to the various motif groups, viz., individual objects presented in chapter 5.[45] This procedure seems advisable in view of the fact that it is not the scope of this study to present a discussion on warrior-gods in the ANE, or on Neo-Assyrian glyptic, but rather to understand the God of heaven and warrior metaphors from an iconographic perspective. This approach, however, should not be confused with the one-directional comparative approach criticized above.[46] The order of presentation will first address the parallels and then proceed to the contrasts.[47] It is important to note that the form of comparison will present the texts in connection with their relevant iconographic comparative material. The texts have to be understood as expressing the various concepts of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors that have been isolated throughout the exegetical part of the study.

6.2.1. Psalm 18:8-16

(1) '... and fire devoured from his mouth' (9a): The first point of contact between the psalm and the iconographic evidence can be found in the description of Yahweh prior to his descent in the clouds, portraying him anthropomorphically with nose and mouth from which smoke and fire are emanating. **Figure 93** shows a deity in a standing and in a sitting position with an uraeus coming forth from his mouth.[48] This function of the uraeus may be understood along similar lines as the devouring fire from Yahweh's mouth, i.e., expressing wrath and anger metaphorically described as a

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[44] The selection of texts was motivated by the statistical evaluation of references as established in chapter 3, whereas the criteria for the choice of iconographic objects has been spelled out in the introduction to the preceding chapter.

[45] For a synopsis of all iconographics object in form of a catalogue, refer to the Appendix which has been added, in order to facilitate the reading of the present chapter.

[46] Cf. above under 6.1.4. Evaluation of the Comparative Method for the methodological reasoning behind this statement.

[47] The biblical texts are presented in accordance with the translations of the respective vs(s). that have been provided in chapter 4.

[48] Interestingly, the dating of the object (1000-900 B.C.) from Ta'anach corresponds roughly to our dating of the psalm.

consuming fire. However, the biblical context is that of a storm-theophany, while the iconographic image does not refer to such a theme at all, but rather has solar connotations within an Egyptian cultural context (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:156).[49]

(2) 'Then he spread apart the heavens, and he came down, and thick darkness (was) under his feet' (10a-b):[50] Yahweh is dividing the clouds like a curtain before his coming down. Especially the god in the winged sundisk (**Figures 28-36**) and god in the winged sundisk with the bow (**Figures 87-91**) motif group are referents for this imagery, since there the heavenly realm is clearly indicated and a connection between the earth is established. The only image where the cloud motif is clearly taken up is in **Figure 90** which shows the weather- and sun-god in the winged sundisk with a bow. Next to the god, a row of clouds filled with hail and raindrops are depicted, and the feathery wings of the sundisk viz., god are also connotative of the heavens thick with clouds (cf. our remarks to **Figures 87-88**). The movement from above to below is indicated in scenes where the god in the winged sundisk is extending his hands downwards, aiming downwards with his bow, or offering the bow to the king below (**Figures 31, 87, 90**). However, the fact has to be reiterated that the images are mainly associated with Mesopotamia and not in Syro-Palestine, since only **Figures 31** and **33** come from that region. Thus only a correlation on a larger scale can be proposed.

(3) 'And he mounted a cherub and he flew, and he swooped on the wings of the wind' (11a-b): Yahweh's ride on the cherub as a means of transport during his descent from heaven is rather rare, especially since we are confronted with a singular form here, and not with a plural (as in Eze 10:18,19 and 11:22). As observed above, the cherub has been associated with the cherubim throne, as described e.g., in Psa 80:2. Cherubim as throne for a deity are especially attested on images originating from the Phoenician coastal line (**Figures 68-69** from the 7th to 5th centuries B.C. depicting Melqart the Ba'al of Tyre sitting on a throne supported by two winged sphinxes). In the Syro-Palestinian region no 'occupied' cherubim

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[49] In trying to establish a correlation between a biblical text and an iconographic image, it is generally not possible (and not endeavoured) to find a one-to-one correspondence between picture and text. Often it is a single element in the text, or the depiction that can be correlated to each other. However, the respective contexts need to be taken into consideration.

[50] Cf. also vs. 12a-b and 13a-b: 'He appointed darkness as his hiding place around him; his pavilion the darkness of waters, tight clouds. From the brightness before him clouds went by, hail and coals of fire'.

throne has been found[51] and the cherub (winged sphinx) appears to have been employed in a guarding function, often in connection with an *ankh*-sign displaying the Egyptian influences in the local glyptic (cf. **Figures 63-67**). However, the imagery in Psa 18:11 cannot be understood along the lines of a cherubim throne,[52]but rather as one cherub portrayed as a creature whose flying abilities are paralleled to the wings of the wind in vs. 11b, and who is mounted (רכב) by Yahweh for his descent from heaven. The weather-god in his chariot (**Figure 92**) riding through the heavens may be the closest approximation iconography can provide. Furthermore, the rather singular representation in **Figure 54** has been connected to Psa 18:11 (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:389). The element on the stamp seal which is of relevance for the present discussion shows a bearded winged god standing above a single winged sphinx.[53] However, Yahweh is explicitly described as flying on the cherub.

(4) 'And he sent his arrows and scattered them, and lightnings he multiplied and he confused them' (15a-b): The parallelism between lightning and arrows becomes apparent in this vs., as Yahweh becomes active in the theophany, bringing together the god of heaven and warrior attributes. Repeatedly the importance of the bundle of lightning for the identification of the weather-god has been mentioned and various contexts have been isolated in which the bundle of lightning appears, while especially the active scenes, i.e., where lightning is used as a weapon, are of preeminent interest. **Figures 12** and **15** show Ninurta fighting the Anzu dragon, viz., the horned snake, although it cannot be distinguished if the arrows are portrayed in the form of lightning. On **Figures 78, 81-83** the lightning serves clearly as a weapon against the horned snake or an imaginary enemy (**Figure 78**), although it is not depicted in the form of an arrow. Both ideas (lightning as a weapon in the form of an arrow) are brought together in the more detailed depiction of the weather-god in the sun-disk in **Figure 91** shooting an arrow with a lightning-like point. In most cases the enemy against whom the attack is directed, is derived from Neo-Assyrian

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[51] **Figure 61** is a depiction of a banquet scene depicting the king sitting on a throne supported by the winged sphinx.

[52] Comment Keel and Uehlinger: "Der Vorstellung vom 'Kerubenthroner' liegt nicht die des (*einen*, Sg.) [all their italics] Kerubs als Reit- oder Fahrtier des Wettergottes von Ps 18,11 zugrunde" (1992:191, n. 124).

[53] It is not altogether clear, if the god is standing on the back of the mythological creature or if he is suspended in mid-air above the wings of the sphinx. In like manner, the winged goddess is shown as hovering above the stylized palm tree and the head of the sphinx. Taking the composition and proportions into consideration it might be a possible interpretation that the winged god and goddess have been added later to the familiar scene of a winged sphinx guarding the sacred tree.

mythology and can be identified as the Anzu dragon/horned snake representing the chaotic forces. Although the theme has to be understood as a product of the Assyrian glyptic repertoire, its reception and adaptation to a Syro-Palestine background can be seen in **Figure 15**, while most depictions come from the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. representing depictions of both the weather- and sun-god. Thus the imagery of Yahweh shooting arrows in the form of the meteorological phenomenon appears to be a well-established theme found in both the biblical text and ANE iconography.[54]
(5) In contrast to the iconographic depictions on which the gods are usually depicted anthropomorphically, the biblical text limits itself to a description of a few of Yahweh's body parts, thus retaining the notion of the *deus absconditus* throughout the description of the theophany. Repeatedly the covering clouds and darkness are mentioned, while the accompanying features are described in more detail. While the images described above normally include mythological themes (e.g., the fight against the dragon), the biblical text is clear that the subject of Yahweh's attack from heaven are the king's enemies against whom the arrows are ultimately directed.[55] Various other dynamic elements which form part of the biblical text (e.g., the shaking of the foundations of the world, the brightness before Yahweh in contrast to the darkness under his feet, the hail and coals of fire, the thundering, the whole atmosphere of natural turmoil, etc.) find little reflection in the iconographic evidence. This may be explained by their dynamic nature which cannot easily be captured by the two-dimensional limitations of an image. A number of elements found in the description of the theophany in Psa 18:8-16 occasionally find close counterparts in ANE iconography, whereas there are also a number of important features which are exclusive to the biblical text.

6.2.2. Psalm 21:9-13

(1) 'Your hand found out all your enemies, your right hand found out who hate you' (9a-b): As observed in the exegetical remarks concerning this vs., the language does not refer to a mere finding of the enemy in the sense of coming across something. , but rather bears strong characteristics of war terminology. The idea behind the biblical text is the physical seizing of the enemy. Iconographic images which are communicating this idea are found especially within the smiting god motif group. **Figures 2, 6,** and **7** show the

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[54] And also in ANE texts for that matter (cf. Weinfeld, 1986:121-147).

[55] A good reflection of this theme is found in **Figure 87** and **90** which indicate that the god with his aggression is aiding the king.

smiting god holding the head of an enemy by his hair[56] with one hand, whereas the other hand is raised above the head ready to strike the death blow. While this iconographic motif has been popular, especially in Egyptian royal iconography during the beginning of the Iron Age (cf. **Figure 2**), it also found some repercussion in Mesopotamia (cf. **Figure 7**) and the Syro-Palestine region (cf. **Figure 6**), while the depictions from the latter two regions are chronologically dated only to the 8th century B.C. Characteristic for this motif is its closeness of the royal iconography to depictions of deities which at times makes it difficult to distinguish between the two. **Figure 7** from Mesopotamia clearly shows a mythological scene and not the king-enemy conflict. The closeness between the enemy motif and the threat of the chaotic forces is demonstrated in **Figure 3** on which the enemy has been replaced by the horned snake, held by the smiting figure (cf. Keel, 1972:274f.). The physical seizing of the enemy in Psa 29:9 has to be understood along the lines of the imagery of the smiting god motif, i.e., God as warrior being actively involved in the attack on the psalmist's enemies.[57] Seizing the enemies' head shows the superiority that the psalmist ascribes to Yahweh in the conflict.

(2) 'In his anger he swallowed them and fire devoured them' (10c): The association of Yahweh swallowing the enemies with the devouring fire might refer back to the imagery noted in connection with Psa 18:9 and its affinity to **Figure 93**. However, the idea is not altogether clear, and further correlation cannot be established.[58]

(3) 'For you made them (turn their) shoulder' (13a): An interesting feature of the smiting god motif group is the position of the enemy in **Figures 2** and **6**. Although the figures are in a fleeing position, i.e., the whole body appears to be moving away from the king, the shoulders are turned toward him, and the enemy is facing the king. These depictions may be able to

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[56] Cf. below our remarks to Psa 68:22.

[57] Comments Keel on the function of the smiting god motif particularly in Egyptian iconography: "Die Bedeutung dieser Abbildungen lag nicht (jedenfalls nicht hauptsächlich) in einem Beitrag psychologisch-propagandistischer Natur, was modern gedacht ist, sondern ihre Aufgabe war, in diesem gefährdeten Gebiet [i.e., the northern borders of the Egyptian empire] auf magische Weise die unwiderstehlich siegreiche Macht des ägyptischen Königs gegenwärtig zu setzen.... Diese Auffassung erklärt die Beliebtheit des Themas. Je häufiger das 'Zauberbild' dargestellt wurde, um so stärker wurde die Macht des Pharao, das Land gegenüber allen Angriffen zu verteidigen" (1972:274).

[58] While in Psa 18:9 fire is coming forth from the mouth of god, in Psa 21:10 he is swallowing the enemies. Parallel in both vss. is the complete destruction of the enemies indicated by the devouring fire.

explain the somewhat opposing metaphors of 13a and 13b. Although the enemy is portrayed in flight, his shoulder is turned toward the king, exposing his face for Yahweh's attack (cf. Keel, 1972:figs. 397, 398, 400a, 400c, and 402). The turning of the shoulder appears to be a symbol of utter submission and surrender, since the initial purpose of fleeing indicated by the figures' postures cannot be accomplished.[59]

(4) '... with your bowstring you took aim against their faces' (13a): In accordance with the preceding point, Yahweh takes aim with the bow[60] against the now exposed face of the enemy. Although the smiting god motif did not occur in connection with a god aiming a bow at an enemy, there are a number of depictions which contribute to the understanding of the imagery. Especially **Figure 11** appears to be of prime interest,[61] since it combines an archer scene with a god extending the curved sword toward the pharaoh, a combination reminiscent of Psa 21:13. While the god is depicted with the curved sword extended toward the pharaoh as standing on the opposite side of a shooting target, the pharaoh is aiming with the bow at the target to which two Semitic captives are bound, one facing the king and one facing the god. Besides these interesting depictions, gods with bows aiming against enemies can be seen in **Figures 90** and **91** both of Neo-Assyrian origin.

(5) 'You put them as (into) a fiery furnace at the time of your appearance, o Yahweh' (10a-b): Although this form of capital punishment has been known throughout the ANE,[62] no iconographic image corresponding to such a practice could be identified.[63] Furthermore, the attack on the enemy's offspring as described in vs. 11a-b and the frustrated attempts of the enemy to plot against Yahweh in vs. 12a-b, appear to go beyond the capacity of an iconographic depiction.

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59 Cf. Wilkinson's discussion of body language in Egyptian iconography where the gesture occurs in connection with the turned bow (1994:200-203, fig. 153).

60 Taking the bowstring as a *pars pro toto* for the whole weapon, viz., the preparatory task of stringing the bow.

61 The cylinder seal comes from Beth Shean and dates to the end of the Late Bronze Age or beginning of the Iron Age I, i.e., the time of Ramses II (1301-1254 B.C.).

62 Cf. our remarks to Psa 21:10 in chapter 4, and also the story of Daniel's friends as reported in Dan 3, where the punishment takes place in a Mesopotamian setting, though from an Israelite perspective.

63 As a possible point of comparison from Egyptian iconography, the depiction of human bodies in a possibly fiery pit found on the *Amduat* from the grave of Thutmoses III (Watson, 1991:34-36).

6.2.3. Psalm 29:3-9

(1) 'The voice of Yahweh is upon waters, the God of glory thunders' (3a-b): The main motif of Psa 29, the קוֹל יְהוָה has been identified as referring to the approaching sound of a thunderstorm moving inland from the Mediterranean. It depicts Yahweh as storm- and weather-god, to which the iconographic motif of the god in the winged sundisk probably comes closest. The audible sound of thunder, obviously, cannot be easily reproduced by an iconographic image, but the densely feathered wings of the god in the winged sundisk have repeatedly been identified as symbolizing the dark clouds and stormy heavens associated with a thunderstorm (cf. **Figures 88, 90,** and **91**).[64] With regard to the thunder: the club which the smiting weather-god often holds in his hand (e.g., **Figure 75**) has been associated with the sound of thunder in the way of Ba'al beating the heavens like a drum with his club, but the club should rather be understood as a weapon in the fight against an enemy, though not be confused with the thunderbolt, viz., lightning (Keel, 1972:192).
(2) '... Yahweh is over mighty waters' (3c): Furthermore, while primarily symbolizing the Mediterranean in this context, the מַיִם רַבִּים have repeatedly been associated with the chaotic forces represented by the horned snake of Canaanite mythology. **Figures 17-20** illustrate the struggle of the Canaanite-Egyptian Ba'al-Seth, with the spear against the horned snake. The depictions show him thrusting his weapon in a downward movement into the body of the snake. Most of the images depicting this motif originated during the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age I. However, in Psa 29 no direct struggle is reflected between Yahweh and the chaotic waters; a fact which necessitates some caution toward an interpretation of the biblical text along mythological lines.[65]
(3) 'And he makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young of an aurochs' (6a-b): The association of the weather-god with mountains can be observed in **Figure 79** and **Figure 80** in which he is standing on two or three mountain tops, although there is no indication of a similar destructive

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[64] There is a certain ambivalence in the interpretation of the god in the winged sundisk: while in most cases the deity can be identified with the Assyrian sun-god Šamaš (and not with Asshur!), he often is found in contexts displaying storm- and weather-god attributes (cf. the clouds in **Figure 90** or the lightning arrow in **Figure 91**, or even the association of Šamaš with rain in **Figures 29, 32,** and **89**). It is, however, of little consequence for the purpose of the present study, if the god in the winged sundisk is to be identified with Šamaš or with Asshur.

[65] Cf. also the depiction of the sun-god sitting enthroned in his temple above the waters on a stone tablet from Sippar dated to the beginning of the 9th century B.C. (Keel, 1972:153, fig. 239).

earthquake-like event on the two seals from Northern Syria representing this motif. While in the iconographic depictions of gods striding over mountains, the mountains are portrayed as a constant and stabile factor supporting the mountain-god, almost as a cultic pedestal, the psalmist describes them as fragile objects subjected to Yahweh's earthquake which causes them to skip uncontrollably. Although the author of the psalm takes up the motif of the mountain, he does not use the imagery in the expected manner, a fact that could be associated with polemic intentions.

(4) 'The voice of Yahweh hews out lightning' (7a): In similar fashion to Psa 18:15, Yahweh's appearance, here Yahweh's voice, is associated with lightning. While the imagery behind the vs. is that of the effect of Yahweh's voice on the rocky surface of the mountains, the images showing the weather-god using the bundle of lightning as a weapon may serve as comparative material (**Figure 78, 81-83**). The famous 'Ba'al au foudre'[66] (**Figure 75**) with the vegetation spear may be an indicator for the combination of the imagery of lightning with fertility. Comments Keel: "Wie Jahwe den Wind herausführt, so schaffen die Blitze (ikonographisch: die Lanze) dem Regen einen Weg. Der Regen aber ermöglicht die Vegetation (ikonographisch: sprossender Baum)" (1972:194). However, while the iconographic depictions may picture the lightning as a contributing factor to fertility, Psa 29 portrays its effects on fauna and flora in a rather destructive way, pointing rather to the warrior imagery:[67] 'The voice of Yahweh breaks cedars, yes, Yahweh, shatters the cedars of Lebanon' (5a-b), and: 'The voice of Yahweh causes the desert to writhe, Yahweh causes the desert Kadesh to writhe. The voice of Yahweh makes the hinds to bring forth and lays bare the forests' (8a-9b).

(5) The overall picture that emerges from a comparison of Psa 29:3-9 with the iconographic evidence is a tendency toward using the prevalent iconographic motifs of particularly the Northern Syrian repertoire, but reapplying them polemically and subjecting them to the force of Yahweh's voice as the ultimate controlling factor in the upheaval of nature. The northern geography of the psalm furthermore contributes to such an understanding, while the imagery employed in the psalm has been utilized in such a way that it leads from the known to the surprising, i.e., reinterpreting the imagery from the perspective and under the dominion of Yahweh's voice. Especially iconographic objects depicting the smiting god motif seem to represent possible models for such a reinterpretation.

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[66] The designation is a good demonstration of a traditionalized misinterpretation.

[67] Cf. depictions where the tree-like weapon is clearly used in an aggressive way (e.g., Cornelius, 1994:figs. 50-51).

6.2.4. Psalm 46:7-12

(1) 'Nations raged, kingdoms slipped - he raised his voice: the earth melted' (7a-b): Allusion to the appearance of God in the thunder, as observed above in Psa 29, is made via the theophanic element of Yahweh's voice. Although the context here in Psa 46 is not so much describing a natural phenomenon, it nevertheless demonstrates the warrior properties of the קוֹל יְהוָה, since the effects on the whole earth are recorded to be as destructive as in the description of the divine thunderstorm in Psa 29.[68] The earth is understood as synonymous to the nations and kingdoms from vs. 7a. Referents for this imagery can be found in **Figures 2, 3, 6,** and **9** which show gods in the smiting position with various enemies.[69] While the connection is the above mentioned relationship between the voice of Yahweh, i.e., his thunder, and the club raised above its head, the aggressive connotation of the scene becomes evident through the depictions of the god's enemies. On **Figures 2** and **6** it is a human enemy who is subjected by the king thereby representing the hostile nations and kingdoms mentioned in vs. 7.[70] **Figure 3** shows the smiting god raising his curved sword against the mythological Apophis-snake, indicating the relationship between the chaotic forces and the enemies as the object of the god's aggression. **Figure 9** shows the motif at a later stage, depicting Heracles with a club raised above his head grasping the hind leg of a lion, thus depicting the supremacy of the god over the untamed forces of nature represented by the lion. In like fashion, Psa 46:7 portrays Yahweh's supremacy over mankind, but also over the inhabited world, and from the reaction of the earth toward Yahweh's appearance, i.e., its melting after he has been raising his voice, one expects a continuance of the scene along the lines of the warrior imagery created in this vs.
(2) 'Yahweh of hosts (is) with us' (8a/12a): The divine epithet יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת communicates the warrior imagery of the psalm and is indicative of the notion that Yahweh is with the king and his people in the fight against the

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[68] The melting away of the earth (תמוג ארץ) is indicative of God's acts of judgement.

[69] On **Figures 2** and **3** the club is replaced by the curved sword, but the general composition of the scene with king/god vs. enemy/snake is retained, and the images thus can serve as comparative material for the vs. under consideration.

[70] Interestingly, the king or god in the smiting position with an enemy is often portrayed out of proportion, at times towering over the enemy. From this way of depiction it becomes apparent that the motivation for this iconographic motif is not the representation of a battle scene or an actual combat, but the illustration of the supremacy of the king on an abstracted level (cf. notes 57 and 86).

enemies.[71] There are several images among the selection of objects for this study which reflect this idea: **Figure 11**, the Ramessidian cylinder seal from Beth Shean, shows the pharaoh shooting at a target on which two Asiatic prisoners are bound. In the background of the scene Reshef is standing extending one hand toward the pharaoh in which he holds a curved sword thus condoning and supporting the action of the king. An even more active involvement of the god in warfare is found in **Figure 87** and **88** where the Assyrian sun-god Šamaš offers the bow to the Assyrian king who is holding a group of captives on a rope. Again, the god is presenting a token of his support for the king's warfare, here in retrospect, since the battle has already taken place. Thus the bow becomes a sign of dominance after battle,[72] an idea which is reminiscent of the rainbow in Gen 9 which Yahweh gives as a sign of his covenant with humankind.[73] Finally, **Figure 90** demonstrates the god's involvement in the actual battle. Although the tile is broken off at the bottom, the scene can be reconstructed with certainty.[74] While the king is pursuing his enemy with his chariot, the warrior- and sun-god Šamaš with wings and feathery tail can be seen above the king in a corona of sun-rays. He is pointing his arrow into the direction of the fleeing enemies, thereby making it clear, that it is not the king who is doing the actual fighting but the god himself on behalf of the king. The expression in Psa 46:8 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ 'Yahweh of hosts with us' has to be

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[71] Yahweh's intervention on behalf of the king and his people is one of the governing characteristics in the description of Israelite warfare (cf. Kang, 1989:204-208). The same notion is found throughout the ANE (cf. Kang, 1989:45f., 65-70, 101-105).

[72] During war, the god is depicted as aiming with his bow at the king's enemies (**Figure 90**), whereas after battle the god offers the bow with the bowstring turned away from the god to the king as a sign of dominance (**Figures 87-88**). Comments Wilkinson with regard to this gesture: "But important exceptions to this stance [i.e., the bow held in the normal position with bowstring turned towards the holding person] are found in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Iranian art, where a number of representations show kings in battle, holding audience, receiving tribute from subject peoples, or standing before servants while holding a bow backwards, with the bowstring outward. The bow is obviously useless when held in this manner, and the pose thus appears to represent a formalized gesture. While this stance has sometimes been thought to signify the accomplishment of hunting feats or military victories, it is found in many other contexts, and a number of years ago, I came to the conclusion that it is more likely that the 'turned bow' represents a formal gesture of dominance" (1994:200).

[73] Cf. Uehlinger (1989:195-197) who follows Rüterswörden (1988:247-263) in linking the rainbow of Gen 9 with the real bow an idea which is expressed by **Figure 87** and **88**.

[74] Cf. a more complete depiction of the scene can be seen on a relief from Nimrud dating to the 9th century B.C., on which the Assyrian king is pursuing his enemies with a chariot. He has pointed his bow against the fleeing group of enemies while above the chariot Šamaš can be seen in the winged sundisk in an identical posture, aiming his bow into the same direction (Keel, 1972:pl. 20).

understood from a military perspective along the lines of God intervening in warfare on behalf of his people.
(3) 'Come! - behold the works of Yahweh who establishes terrifying events on the earth' (9a-b): The שמות mentioned in 9b mark the turn of the psalm into an unexpected direction. While one anticipates further demonstrations of Yahweh's warfare along the usual lines of ANE warfare, as demonstrated by various iconographic motifs (**Figures 1-12, 15-20, 75-78, 81-83, 90,** and **91**), vs. 10a-c suddenly introduced quite a different scenario: 'Who causes wars to cease to the end of the earth; the bow he shatters, he cuts in pieces the spear, wagons he burns with fire'. Although the language continues to be saturated with war imagery the object of the verbal action is not the enemy or any other hostile entity, but the implements of warfare themselves. Yahweh is destroying the weapons on a universal scale (10a) and puts an end to war between all nations. While the destruction of weaponry is a motif found in ANE iconography denoting the utter humiliation and desperation of a warrior,[75] we are not aware of an image which ascribes such an activity to a god or goddess. The function of deities in the iconographic depiction of warrior motifs appears to be restricted to a supportive or aggressive role in connection with warlike imagery. Thus the image of Yahweh in Psa 46 stands in contrast to the iconographic sources, while the universalistic tendency of the psalm deserves extra mention, in that the end of the war is not limited to the people of Israel, but to the whole earth. Although the depiction of Yahweh follows along the lines of the warrior metaphor in destroying the weaponry of the enemies, he transcends the imagery in stepping out of the expected scheme of divine warfare in expressively putting an end to all warfare on a universal scale.

6.2.5. Psalm 65:10-14

(1) 'You have taken care of the land and you give overflowing to it, you make it exceedingly rich' (10a-b): Yahweh taking care of the land of Palestine in the form of its vegetation and agricultural produce is an imagery for which an iconographic counterpart could be found in the

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[75] Cf. the depiction of an Elamite officer who is cutting his bow in half before being executed (Keel, 1972:218-220, fig. 328), or a group of Canaanite soldiers fleeing to the top of rock, while one of the soldiers is breaking his javelin in utter desperation (Keel, 1972:159f., fig. 245). Comments Keel with regard to Psa 46:10 and its relationship to the depiction of the Elamite officer: "Was der elamitische Offizier hier an seinem Bogen und damit an seinem Vertrauen auf ihn tut, das wird Jahwe bei seinem Erscheinen allen Waffen der Welt und jedem Vertrauen auf sie antun. Er wird sie vernichten und dem Vertrauen auf brutale Gewalt und Machtpolitik ein Ende bereiten (46, 10 76, 4-6....)" (1972:218). Cf. also more recent Keel in Keel, Shuval, and Uehlinger, 1990:27-65).

stylized palm tree surrounded by streams of waters. The sacred palm tree symbolizes the ordered cosmos, while its emphasis lies in the realm of fertility, vegetation, and reproduction (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:265f.). A number of images represent the motif of the sacred palm tree, varying in emphasis: **Figure 43** shows the palm tree resting on a stylized mountain. It is surrounded by streams of water flowing from a winged sundisk into vases standing on the ground. **Figure 44** follows along the same lines, whereas the tree is resting on the ground, and two worshippers are holding on to the water streams and partaking in the provided blessing. In similar fashion **Figure 45** only adds the detail of an armed Ishtar next to the palm tree scene, indicating the affinity of that goddess to the connotation of fertility. The only example from Syro-Palestine, **Figure 46**, shows the palm tree without streams of water as a representation of a fertility goddess around which two adorants are dancing. It becomes apparent that the sacred palm tree could serve as a symbol of fertility, but as such, also as a representation of the orderly cosmos, the cycle of vegetation. However, it is Yahweh who is the generator of the blessings for the land in Psa 65:10a-b. Palm tree and water stream represent the land and its overflowing produce.

(2) 'The canal of God is full of water' (10c): As observed in the exegetical notes to Psa 46:10c, the canal of water has to be understood as a conduit for rain from the heavenly realm to the earth. This occurs especially with the water-providing god motif group, but also in representations of the god in the winged sundisk with streams of waters emanating from the wings downwards toward the earth (**Figures 29, 32,** and **89**). **Figures 37-42** represent the water-providing god, and often depict the Babylonian water- and mountain-god Ea, or one of his representative sub-deities in their capacity of watering the earth by means of a vase from which water flows downwards, often into another vase, thereby creating the canals of the god Ea.[76] The iconography of that motif group is of Middle-Assyrian and Middle-Babylonian origin, reaching into the Neo-Assyrian glyptic repertoire, while there are no representations of that motif group found in Palestinian contexts. Psa 65:10c shows that the conception of the phenomenon of rainfall by means of a canal linking heaven and earth was commonplace throughout the ANE. Thus the life-giving water originates in the presence of the deity.

(3) 'You provide her grain, for in such a way prepare it. Watering its furrows, leveling its ridges' (10d-e, 11a): **Figure 59** serves as the most promising candidate for an iconographic reflection of this imagery. The

[76] Cf. especially **Figures 37** and **41** on which Ea is depicted as holding the vases from which the water flows downwards, creating a lush mountain vegetation in **Figure 37**.

cylinder seal housed in the BIF dating to the 9th century B.C. shows the weather-god Adad handing three ears of corn to Ishtar who is holding a tambourine. The relationship between Ishtar and Adad has a strong connotation of fertility, enhanced by the symbolic gesture of the god and the presence of agricultural activities in the background of the scene. The providing of grain has to be understood as a *pars pro toto* for the agricultural produce of the land, securing the livelihood of the people.

(4) 'With heavy showers you soften it up, its sprouting you bless' (11b): **Figure 60** shows an interesting and often discussed motif[77] found on a Tridacna-shell from Arad dating to around 700 B.C.[78] It shows the upper body of a bearded deity who has raised his hand in the typical gesture of blessing, emanating from a sundisk which is surrounded by an abundance of lotus flower. In similar fashion to Psa 65:11b the god is blessing the sprouting vegetation around him, thus combining solar attributes with creative power indicated by the presence of the lotus flowers. Another depiction which corresponds to the imagery of 11b is the 'Ba'al au foudre' (**Figure 75**) whose spear shaft ends in a sprouting tree, indicating the close relationship between fertility and the characteristic of the warrior-god, i.e., the spear-like weapon. **Figure 58** shows a seal impression from Nippur dating to the end of the Late Bronze Age which also corresponds to the imagery of 11b. Here the water- and mountain-god Ea is depicted in a kneeling position within a mountain-like double-faced figure which can be identified as his helper Usmû who is holding the front legs of two winged griffins, representing the fauna. Surrounding the gods, a lush vegetation, mountains, and the heaven symbolized by the flying eagles can be seen, thus creating an ordered cosmos in which the water-providing god is at the center.

(5) '... and your tracks drip fatness' (12b): Yahweh's tracks have been associated with the tracks of Ba'al's chariot riding through the land. While we have sources for the chariot of the weather-god in ANE iconography (**Figure 92**), there is little indication in Psa 65 which would point to Yahweh riding a chariot through the countryside.[79] The remainder of Psa 65 rather describes the various agricultural blessings bestowed on the Syro-Palestinian region by Yahweh's sending of rain and fertility.

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[77] Most recently: Keel and Uehlinger (1993:296, fig. 10).

[78] This object is especially interesting for its geographical provenance and chronological integration.

[79] Cf. **Figure 73**, a cylinder seal from Turkey which shows a cult procession involving a chariot which has been interpreted as the chariot of the sun-god Šamaš or a similar local sun-god, while the vehicle represents the deity.

6.2.6. Psalm 68:15-22

(1) 'A mountain of gods is the mountain of Bashan; a mountain of peaks is the mountain of Bashan. Why do you watch with envy, o mountains with peaks, the mountain God has desired as his dwelling? Yes, Yahweh will abide (there) forever' (16a-b, 17a-c): The mountainous dwellings of the gods from a Transjordan geographical perspective versus the superiority of Yahweh's mountain is the theme of these two vss. This imagery is expressed iconographically by depictions of gods striding over mountains, i.e., our **Figures 79** and **80**. For both images a Syrian background may be assumed. Nevertheless, they are rather early for our comparative purposes, falling into the chronological margin set for this study.[80] They depict gods who are closely associated with mountains. Interestingly, the mountain-god in ANE iconography is usually depicted on either two or three mountains, rarely as striding over only one mountain (cf. Dijkstra, 1991:pl. 1-3),[81] while the mountain of God is set into contrast with the many mountains of the gods.[82] The mountains with many peaks represent an assemblage of various gods (cf. **Figure 74** which shows a procession of Neo-Assyrian gods) who are nevertheless envious toward the one mountain, viz., the one and only God. **Figure 58** also shows the close relationship between god and mountain, depicting the water- and mountain-god Ea within another god or semi-god which is sketched in the form of a mountain, while a row of mountains form the horizon of the image. Comments Keel on the rivalry between the mountains of the gods and Yahweh's mountain as expressed in this vs.:

> Von Jahwe, der auf dem Zion wohnt, und nicht von irgendwelchen heiligen Bergen soll der Beter sein Heil erwarten (121, 1f). Ihnen allen hat Jahwe den Zion vorgezogen. Lauernd und mißgünstig blicken die hohen Berge der Umgebung auf ihn herab (68, 16f). Denn trotz seines bescheidenen Äußeren ist er der wirkliche Götterberg, der eigentliche Zaphon (48, 3) (1972:102).

(2) 'The chariots of God are twice ten-thousand, thousands of bright ones' (18a-b): While the chariot of the weather-god can be found in **Figure 92** illustrating the association of the god with a war chariot, in Psa 68:18a-b

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[80] We have, however, established that Psa 68 is also using rather 'old' imagery, i.e., the conquest battles east of the Jordan river (cf. the exegetical notes to Psa 68).

[81] It appears that the god on pl. 3:2 (Dijkstra, 1991:140) is striding over two mountains which have been moved closely together by the seal cutter.

[82] Another example given by Dijkstra demonstrates the identification of god and mountain in the most explicit way (1991:pl. 1:2). He describes the object as follows: "This seal shows the weather-god standing on two scaled mountains, facing to the left, where a third mountain in the form of the mountain-god is seen, who offers an animal to the weather-god..." (1991:129).

the imagery seems to be more along the lines of a procession of the heavenly host (the 'bright ones') which is following Yahweh to the chosen mountain, and ultimately, synonymously to his mountain, into his sanctuary: 'Adonai has come from Sinai into the sanctuary' (18c). Similar to **Figure 60**, there are depictions found on Tridacna-shells from Sippar which show the god in the lotus nimbus flanked by two horsemen. Although like representations have not been surfaced in Syro-Palestine, the terra-cotta figures of horses and horsemen from Jerusalem have in analogy been associated with the host of Yahweh.[83] While the correlation is indirect and no chariots are mentioned, it appears safe to say that the imagery of Yahweh's accompanying military host in the form of chariots and 'bright ones' finds some repercussions in ANE iconography. Since there is an association between the host of heaven and astral imagery, **Figures 48-53** may serve as a point of comparison. On all six images Ishtar appears surrounded by a nimbus of stars depicted with varying degrees of craftsmanship. In like manner, Yahweh is surrounded by the host of heaven as he victoriously proceeds to his sanctuary.

(3) 'You ascended to the height, you took prisoners, you received gifts from mankind' (19a-b): The victory procession depicted in vs. 19 is known from royal iconography throughout the ANE,[84] but the images usually focus on the king and do not represent the god as the object of the various characteristics associated with such a procession. **Figure 87** shows the Assyrian king with captives while the sun-god in the winged sundisk offers his blessing through the hand and the bow he is extending toward the king. Gods receiving gifts or offerings from men or worshippers are depicted in

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[83] Keel and Uehlinger comment: "Gehören die palästinensischen Reiter wie die auf der Tridacna aus Sippar zur Sphäre eines derartigen El-artigen Himmels- und Schöpfergottes - der in Juda kaum ein anderer als Jahwe gewesen sein kann -, dann legt es sich nahe, die Terrakottastatuetten als populäre, anthropomorphe Repräsentationen des *'Himmelsheeres'* [their italics] zu verstehen. Semantisch kommt sowohl im Bildmotiv des Reiters (vgl. Jer 6,23!) als auch im Kollektivnamen 'Himmelsheer' der Aspekt kriegerischer Epiphanie zum Ausdruck" (1992:396). In our opinion, the weakness of the argument lies in the analogy between the god found on the Tridacna-shell from Sippar, and the creator-god from Palestine. However, the identification, or at least, the correlation of horsemen and host of heaven appears possible. That the horses have celestial or solar connotations, is shown by the fact that they are often carrying sundisks on their head - which would associate them rather with the sun-god.

[84] Cf. the ivory plaque from Megiddo found on our **Figure 61**: the half which is missing in our depiction shows a king returning from battle with two naked captives walking in front of his chariot (Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:71, fig. 65).

ANE iconography, although not in the contexts of victory processions (e.g., **Figure 24**).[85]

(4) 'Verily - God will shatter the head of his enemies, the hairy scalps of those who continuously walk in their trespasses' (22a-b): The smiting of the enemy's head described in this vs. is analogue to the familiar smiting god motif from ANE iconography, represented by **Figures 1-11, 75-83** with the gesture of the raised arm forming the largest common denominator of the various motif groups discussed within the limits of the present study. While the motif usually depicts weather- and war-gods with different geographical and chronological characteristics, it is clear that the gesture always indicates the supremacy of the god versus the subjugation of the enemy or animal respectively. The detail of the 'hairy skull' mentioned in 22b is not a byproduct of the psalmist's vivid imagination or an exercise in the *parallelismus membrorum* of Hebrew verse, but as can be seen from **Figures 2, 6,** and **7**, it serves as an important part of the imagery. Comments Keel: "Der haarige Scheitel des Gefangenen erscheint auch in den Pss als Charakteristikum der Feinde (68, 22). Er soll das Tier- und Triebhafte signalisieren..." (1972:271). Thus the subjugation of the enemy is closely associated with the triumph over the chaotic forces, represented by the hairy skull of the enemy. From a number of images it becomes apparent that the smiting god motif has been isolated from a concrete war situation, reducing the gesture of the raised arm holding the weapon to strike at an enemy to a mere emblem, a symbol of victory and dominion (cf. **Figures 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 75, 76-80**). Particularly, depictions where no real enemy is visible or where the raised weapon is of such proportions that it can only be accredited with symbolic value (e.g., **Figure 80**), illustrate this tendency. Thus the smiting god becomes the menacing god without active involvement in the battle, but portrayed in a canonized position with almost magical propensities (cf. Keel, 1972:274).[86] The emphasis of the menacing god posture is apotropaic instead of victorious. However, with regard to Psa 68:22a-b it appears reasonable to conclude that the emphasis lies on Yahweh's victory and subjugation of the enemies, whereas it is not

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[85] On the Sheshonk relief from Karnak, it is the god Amun who is offering Asiatic captives to the pharaoh (Keel, 1972:281, pl. 22).

[86] In his concluding remarks on the study on the Canaanite gods Reshef and Ba'al during the Late Bronze and Iron Age I periods, Cornelius observes rightly with regard to the smiting god motif: "The term 'menacing god' has been used to describe figures with a raised hand or fist, sometimes holding a weapon in the same threatening way. This has been described as the pose of the so-called 'smiting god'.... However, this term is somewhat misleading as it is taken from the figure of the so-called 'smiting pharaoh' ... who grabs the enemy and is about to strike him down with a raised weapon (usually a *ḫpš*-sword)" (1994:255).

intended to be a literal description of Yahweh's warfare, but follows along the lines of ANE iconography in the depiction of the imagery, i.e., as a representation of Yahweh's dominion.
(5) 'When Shaddai scattered kings, thereby it snowed on Zalmon' (15a-b): While the interpretation of this vs. is not without problems, the imagery of Yahweh's warfare and judgement against the kings by means of falling snow designates an imagery which lacks representation in ANE iconography. The closest approximation to it may be found in the depiction of the clouds filled with rain of hail in **Figure 90**, but even here the image of falling rain is not represented.

6.2.7. Psalm 83:14-18

(1) 'My God, make them like thistledown, like chaff before the wind' (14a-b): The imagery of chaff being blown by the wind as an effect of Yahweh's intervention is connected to the theophanic event which is accompanied by the natural phenomenon of a storm. An explicit storm imagery is not easily found in ANE iconography, since dynamic processes like heavy winds or falling snow (cf. above) are not easily captured on an iconographic level. The weather-god Tarhunzas riding on his chariot through the heavens may serve as a representation of wind (**Figure 92**).
(2) 'As fire consumes the forest, and as the flame scorches the mountains' (15a-b): Yahweh pursuing his enemies with fire can be found in the imagery of the weather-god fighting with the bundle of lightning (**Figures 81-83**), because the description of the psalm is reminiscent of a heavy thunderstorm in which lightning plays a dominant role as well. All three images show the weather-god Ninurta or Adad[87] fighting the Anzu snake, whereas his main weapon is the bundle of lightning. Interestingly, in **Figure 21** which also shows Ninurta in a more passive stance, it is his characteristic animal, the horned dragon, which demonstrates the lightning weapon in the form of the three-forked bundle of lightning emanating from its mouth. But since the dragon serves as a second representation of Ninurta (Moortgat-Correns, 1988:126), the image represents the weather-god fighting with the bundle of lightning. Although not along the lines of the imagery of lightning, the depiction of the uraeus emanating from the god's mouth in **Figure 93** may be mentioned which may also serve as a point of comparison, yet without the necessary context of storm imagery.
(3) 'In like manner you shall pursue them with your whirlwind, and with your storm you shall terrify them' (16a-b): The imagery of the violent

[87] Cf. the remarks in the iconographic description of **Figures 83**.

storm continues and the depiction mentioned above in connection with vs. 14 is relevant here as well. Furthermore, the interpretation of the feathery corona surrounding the winged sundisk in **Figure 87** may be taken as a further indication for storm imagery. One, however, misses the dynamic and violent depiction of the thunderstorm given in the psalm in comparison with the depictions found on the images.

(4) 'Fill their faces with shame' (17a): Although no direct iconographic parallel could be established for this figurative expression denoting the utter humiliation of the enemy,[88] the imagery is referring to a similar situation as the victory procession discussed with regard to Psa 68:19. The embarrassment of the enemy is depicted in **Figure 87** found on the 'broken obelisk' from Niniveh which shows a group of captives in front of the Assyrian king with their faces turned upwardly toward him, their hands raised in a gesture of adoration. He is holding a rope in his hand which leads through rings which have been placed into the captives' noses. Thus, by way of an iconographic detail, their faces are filled with shame in similar fashion to the depiction of Psa 83. However, the ultimate objective of the enemy's humiliation in the psalm is not his destruction, but his acknowledgement of Yahweh.[89]

(5) On the whole Psa 83 demonstrates the affinity between the warrior and god of heaven metaphors in describing the destructive effect of the thunderstorm and equating it with a weapon Yahweh employs in the destruction of the enemies. This imagery especially becomes apparent in **Figure 91** where Šamaš is directing an arrow of lightning with his bow against an imaginary enemy.

6.2.8. Psalm 144:5-8

(1) 'Yahweh, spread apart your heavens, so that you may come down' (5a): Though in the form of an invocation directed toward Yahweh, the vs. refers back to Psa 18:10 in requesting his theophany by spreading apart the cloud cover and descending from heaven. In like fashion, the god in the winged sundisk with or without bow forms the most promising comparative material for this imagery (**Figures 28-36** and **87-91**), whereas especially **Figure 90** and possibly **Figure 88** include the aspect of the sun-god's

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[88] ANE iconography normally cannot express facial emotions, and thus resorts to gestures in order to communicate emotions.

[89] Cf. our remarks with regard to the tension between vss. 17 and 18 in the exegetical section of the present study (4.3.9.4. Comment on Psalm 144:5-8).

association with clouds. However, with the exception of **Figures 31** and **33**, all the images have been found outside of the Syro-Palestinian realm.
(2) '... touch the mountains, so that they may smoke' (5b): The mountain imagery of this colon is in direct reference to Psa 104:32, thus combining the picture of Yahweh's descent on the clouds with the mountain imagery in an innovative manner. As observed with regard to Psa 68, the mountainous dwellings of the gods are subjected to the destructive effect of Yahweh's appearance, and not depicted as a secure and stable element in ANE mythological thought as portrayed in **Figures 79** and **80** on which the mountain-gods are striding over two or three mountain tops.[90]

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[90] Since Psa 104 has not been included in the selection of texts for this study, a short note may be in order to establish the relationship between the psalm and the present discussion. Psa 104 ascribes attributes to Yahweh which can be related to the sun-god and storm-god of ANE iconography, as becomes especially apparent from vss. 1-4: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, thou art very great! Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent, who hast laid the beams of thy chambers on the waters, who makest the clouds thy chariot, who ridest on the wings of the wind, who makest the winds thy messengers, fire and flame thy ministers' (RSV). The affinity of the psalm to the hymn on the sun by Akhenaten has been noted (especially vss.19-30), and discussed repeatedly (for a short bibliography of studies on the relationship between the Egyptian hymn dating to the 14th century B.C. and Psa 104, cf. Dion, 1991:59, n. 65), but it has until recently been neglected that the language of the psalm is also clearly oriented on the imagery of the storm-god (cf. Dion, 1991:48-58). However, the question of how the chronological gap between the Egyptian hymn and the psalm can be adequately bridged, remains uncertain (Dion, 1991:61f.). Dion concludes his observations: "This psalm is a model of mature Yahwistic monism.... When he [the psalmist] portrays YHWH's personal appearance, narrates the creation of an orderly world and accounts for the vital supply of water sustaining all realms of animal land plant life, the psalmist follows many biblical predecessors in borrowing a wealth of epithets and imagery from the storm-god mythology. In a unique move, he develops his enticing picture of the world even further and asserts the dependence of all life upon YHWH with the help of a form of Akhenaten's legacy still accessible in his own time. But far from him to sing of a polar pair of supreme deities, or to merge them into one another. His hymn is most explicitly addressed to the only God of post-exilic Judah, the old war-god YHWH..." (1991:69). For Keel this combination of Egyptian sun-god and Mesopotamian storm-god served as a controlling factor in the formulation of Israelite monotheism: "... der aktive, nahe, punktuell eingreifende Wetter-, Sturm- und Kriegsgott Vorderasiens und der beständige, die Welt andauernd erhaltende und erleuchtende, dynastische Sonnengott der Ägypter. In Jahwe sollten sich diese beiden großen Gottheiten der altorientalischen Welt in der ersten Hälfte des 1. Jts. v. Chr. verbinden. Jahwe gewann so eine Statur, die ihn zu einer sehr bedeutenden Stellung prädestinierte" (1994b:82f.). While Keel places the formulation of an Israelite Yahwistic confession to the pre-exilic period between 600 and 587 B.C., he portrays the peculiarities of Israelite monotheism over against the Egyptian monotheistic tendencies of Akhenaten: "Der judäisch-jüdische Monotheismus ist im Gegensatz zum Lichtmonotheismus geschichts-, gesellschafts- und gerechtigkeitsbezogen. Das ist schon in Jahwes Kampf- und Sonnengott-Vergangenheit angelegt" (1994b:92). Without entering the current discussion on the origins of Israelite monotheism, it appears reasonable to suggest that the notion of Yahweh as supreme god

(3) 'Flash forth lightning and scatter them, send your arrows and confuse them' (6a-b): The familiar lightning/arrows imagery is an invocational reworking of Psa 18:15 where we observed the well-established iconographic background for this motif. It becomes clear that the weapons ascribed to Yahweh are of a meteorological nature. **Figures 12** and **15** show Ninurta fighting the horned snake, viz., another *Mischwesen* representing the chaotic forces, and that is probably the focus of the imagery presented in Psa 144 as the following vs. demonstrates.[91]
(4) 'Stretch out your hand from the height, set me free and deliver me from mighty waters, from the hand of foreigners' (7a-d): The description of Yahweh as reaching out from above and rescuing the psalmist from the mighty waters, can be associated with the *Chaoskampf* motif found in **Figures 17-20** on which the Egyptian-Canaanite Ba'al-Seth is thrusting a long spear downwards into the body of a horned snake (especially **Figures 18** and **19**). This movement from above to below indicates the same dimensional circumstances as described in Psa 144:7, i.e., Yahweh from above is reaching downwards to save the psalmist from the mighty waters, the chaotic forces, represented by the horned snake on the iconographic material, although Yahweh does not fight the mighty waters but rather rescues the psalmist from it. Furthermore, the close affinity between the chaotic forces and human enemies is expressed through the two parallel colons 7c and 7d: the 'mighty waters' appear almost interchangeable with the 'hand of foreigners' representing the enemies.

6.2.9. Iconographic Contrasts

In reversing the direction of comparison, i.e., from the iconographic image toward the biblical text,[92] a number of objects assembled for this study have made little impact on the comparative section. Especially **Figures 22-27** and **48-57** have featured only as secondary evidence. This may be the reflection of a limited selection of texts and a broadening of the biblical scope may enhance the iconographic points of comparisons. Nevertheless, if one considers the motif groups under which these images fall, certain peculiarities become apparent.
(1) **Figures 22-27** belong to the god/dess in arms motif, consisting exclusively of Neo-Assyrian cylinder seals on which normally an armed

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expressed by the warrior and god of heaven metaphors can be traced to an early origin, as (at least) Psa 18 shows.

91 Cf. furthermore our remarks to Psa 18:15, and the comparative material listed there.

92 This is a legitimate approach in the realm of a bi-directional comparison.

Ishtar, Adad, or both can be seen in the context of an adoration scene. In cases, where the biblical text describes Yahweh with warrior attributes (and here lies the phenomenological connection to the armed god or goddess of ANE iconography), he is normally characterized as being actively involved in the actual attack on an enemy. The biblical imagery is never reduced to such a degree, that the warrior attributes become emblematic, as it is the case with the depictions found on the cylinder seals. Although Yahweh acts as a warrior he never becomes the warrior-god exclusively, he rather remains the supreme god displaying warrior characteristics, but not in the form of mere emblem which would designate him as the war-god.[93]

(2) **Figures 48-53** show Ishtar, the goddess in the star nimbus. Although the motif has definite astral and cosmic connotations and thus incorporates god of heaven attributes, only the 'bright ones' in Psa 68:18 were able to furnish a biblical point of comparison for this imagery, although the connection is somewhat indirect and does not reflect the centrality the star nimbus has on the iconographic depictions.

(3) In like manner, **Figures 55-57** depict deities seated on a throne with stars attached to its back, viz., standing below a canopy ornamented with stars.[94] The imagery offers itself as an indication of the celestial throne and may be comparable to texts like Psa 11:4 'The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids test, the children of men' (RSV). However, within our selection of texts the imagery did not play any significant role, representing a somewhat less dominant emphasis within the God of heaven and warrior metaphors.

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[93] This statement may also be applicable to other attributes: sun-god, weather-god, water-providing god, etc.

[94] Cf. also the depiction of Šamaš sitting enthroned in his temple (Keel, 1972:153, fig. 239).

7. CONCLUSIONS

To draw final conclusions from a multifaceted study like the present one, appears to be somewhat restrictive, since it cannot encompass all the aspects which were brought to the attention of the reader throughout the discussion of the topic. Bearing this in mind, an attempt will be made to highlight the most important areas touched upon, followed by a short outlook into the implications of the study on further research.[1]

(1) The importance of the study of metaphor from a modern linguistic and literary perspective lies in the fact that it has been demonstrated as a valuable tool in the deciphering of biblical metaphors, viz., metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter. Especially the concept of a hierarchical relationship between metaphor and submetaphor enables the researcher to organize the abundance of material into units and sub-units according to prior established criteria.[2] It has, however, been established that the demarcation lines between various metaphors cannot be understood as clear-cut, whereas no final understanding of a metaphor exists, and the interpretation or deciphering of a metaphor has always to remain tentative, subjected to further investigation.

(2) Approaching the subject of metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter from a statistical perspective with the tools of modern metaphor theory, proved to be an innovative enterprise, and to the knowledge of the author, a similar study has not been undertaken up to now. Although there cannot be the prerogative of comprehensiveness, the 507 occurrences of metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter isolated during the study provided a sound basis from which it was possible to glean important information with regard to the usage of metaphorical language in the psalter. Interestingly, the total

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1 Although it is an academic practice to read the conclusion of a study as a *pars pro toto* for the rest of the discussion, it does not always present an overall picture of the work. If one endeavours to get a concise overview of the present study, the comparative discussion in chapter 6 offers itself as a more likely candidate than the conclusion.

2 Since the present study attempted a survey of metaphorical language about God in the whole of the Hebrew psalter, it was important to limit the criteria to a feasible amount which nevertheless would guarantee a uniform approach to the material. The criteria were: metaphor (the main metaphor class organized along similar principles as semantic domains) - submetaphor (the resulting sub-class of a metaphor; cf. a semantic sub-domain) - type (the differentiation between an interactive, substitutionary, and ornamental metaphor) - category (the general organization of metaphors according to anthropomorphic, physiomorphic, or theriomorphic classes).

number of occurrences of metaphors could be organized into a proportionally small amount of 17 groups of main metaphors. This demonstrates that the biblical authors, at least the authors of the psalms, used a limited set of metaphors from which they were able to draw when intending to communicate certain attributes of God, although we would not agree with Brettler (1989:160) in trying to reduce metaphors of God to a single original root metaphor which would be the metaphor of God as king. Such a reductionistic approach does not take into consideration the wide range of biblical metaphors of God which at times are far-removed from the idea of God as king, although the God of heaven and warrior metaphors certainly show affinities to the idea of God as king, but also go clearly beyond its ramifications.[3]

The statistical evaluation of the survey established that metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter are predominantly of the interactive (79 %) type, supporting the notion that a metaphor cannot be understood as a rigidly defined entity, but that it is subjected to changes and demarcated by factors such as chronology and reception. It is significant that the majority of metaphors depict God anthropomorphically (65 %), and although there is a hesitancy to elaborate on details in the anthropomorphic description of Yahweh, this category nevertheless constitutes the main communicant of metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter. While Yahweh usually remains the *deus absconditus*, his revelation in most cases proceeds along anthropomorphic lines. Focusing onto the God of heaven and warrior metaphors as the subject of the present study, it was established that both metaphors range relatively high on the scale of number of occurrences.[4] In considering the distribution of these two metaphors within the Hebrew psalter, some tendencies could be observed. The number of occurrences decreases toward the end of the psalter, while the warrior metaphor on its own disappeared completely after Book 3 of the Hebrew psalter, and only occurred in a mixed form in combination with the God of heaven metaphor. Already during the statistical evaluation of the metaphors, it became increasingly difficult to differentiate between the two metaphors. Although

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3 There always remains the tension between a reductionistic and atomistic approach. While the God of heaven and warrior metaphors can be correlated to the king metaphor, it would appear somewhat artificial to make all aspects of these metaphors fit into the scheme of God as king. Throughout the study, we have endeavoured to keep a balance between atomistic and reductionistic tendencies.

4 Neglecting the God's body metaphor on account of the disconnectedness and independence of its various submetaphors, the God of heaven metaphor constituted the main metaphor class with the most occurrences (18 %), whereas the warrior metaphor ranked fifth behind the God of heaven metaphor with an overall number of 8 % of the total occurrences.

we would not suggest that the God of heaven and warrior metaphors always occur in combination with each other, the overlapping, nevertheless, is taking place on such a scale that it would actually be possible to speak of only one metaphor. There are occurrences in which either warrior or God of heaven attributes dominate, but most occurrences feature both metaphors side by side, as we observed repeatedly during the exegetical part of the study. With regard to the decreasing frequency of the metaphor in the Hebrew psalter, we would like to make a cautious observation: as a compilation of hymns and songs, it is reasonable and possible to assume a rough chronological order for the Hebrew psalter. New or more recent poems would naturally be added at the end of the line, forming a certain time frequency from early to late in the order of Book 1-5 of the psalter.[5] If one correlates the decreasing frequency of both metaphors, but especially of the warrior metaphor, it appears that the metaphor lost its popularity toward the end of the time period in which the Hebrew psalter was assembled. While Yahweh as God of heaven and warrior are strong and prominent themes throughout the first half or three-fifth of the psalter, its presence in the last part of the psalter (e.g., Psa 144) is found in the form of a re-use of older material with differing emphasis.

(3) While the selection of texts for the exegetical part, and the accompanying limitation to eight psalms was motivated by the statistical evaluation of the survey of metaphors, it became clear from the outset that this would create a possible margin of texts which would be of relevance for this study, but which were not included in the selection of texts. Nevertheless, the eight psalms under consideration proved to be more than representative for the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, presenting a broad spectrum of meaning for the interpretation of the metaphors in the Hebrew psalter. Bypassing form-critical considerations to a large extent, the exegetical discussion concentrated on the individual significance and meaning of a respective psalm without trying to make it fit into an inflexible overall system.[6] Adhering to a more conservative dating scheme, a chronological sequence for the psalms under discussion could be established, which roughly corresponded to their order of occurrence in the Hebrew psalter, ranging from the 10th to the 5th centuries B.C. (cf. note 5). However, the dating of the material was not a primary concern of the study,

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[5] This is by no means a closed system and there are certainly divergences from this scheme (e.g., in cases of thematically oriented groupings), but generally an overall progression from older to younger hymns appears to be demonstrable, especially with regard to the five traditional divisions.

[6] This exegetical approach was coined as an inner-biblical comparative historical-philological method, noting the complexity of the terminology.

but rather the relative sequence of the psalms for the reason of sketching a chronological development of the metaphors under question. Especially the theophanic event was demonstrated as being closely affiliated with the God of heaven and warrior metaphors. However, while it may be correct that the God of the theophany appears as the God of heaven or as a warrior, the converse is not valid: God as God of heaven or as warrior does not always manifest himself by means of a theophany.[7] Furthermore, it was established that the authors of the psalms used imagery common to their Syro-Palestinian environment, it appeared at times that they would use their material and adapt it to their specific purposes which were repeatedly shown to be of an exclusive Israelite character, e.g., the Palestinian geography in Psa 65, or the polemic nature of Psa 68. Nevertheless, beyond Israelite interests, there was a frequent universal inclination in the description of the metaphor. while Yahweh remains the warrior fighting from heaven, he nevertheless does that on a universal scale, ultimately bringing peace and prosperity, first to Palestine (Psa 65), but beyond that to the whole earth (Psa 46). We would suggest that the notion of Yahweh fighting from heaven on behalf of Israel lies at the core of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, but the imagery is not limited to this notion, and often goes beyond it in a surprising fashion. Yahweh as the warrior from heaven is always depicted as being in ultimate control, and his supremacy is continuously emphasized. He is not engaged in a struggle against the chaos or the enemy, but his victory is an anticipated fact and his dominion over the chaotic forces a *fait accompli*.

(4) The iconographic objects were organized into three groups, i.e., depictions of gods or goddesses displaying warrior attributes, those with god of heaven attributes, and a group manifesting attributes which are reflective of both metaphors. In trying to generalize some tendencies within the corpus of iconographic sources, a number of peculiarities become apparent.[8] The more aggressive or active depictions, i.e., gods or goddesses involved in some form of warlike scenes like the smiting god or the god

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[7] It would be interesting to re-evaluate Jeremias' study on the *Gattung* of theophany in the OT (1965; cf. also Hunter, 1987 and 1989) with regard to the outcome of this study, since it has been demonstrated that the God of heaven and warrior metaphors form an integral part of the theophanic event, thus enlarging the scope of the theophany significantly.

[8] The tendencies isolated here, are, of course, in the form of generalizations that may overlook individual images which do not confirm to the outlined characteristics. It is here that the dialogue with Keel and Uehlinger (1992) is to be sought, while similar developments from a more aggressive iconography toward dominance-oriented depictions of ANE gods in the Palestinian area during the time period under question can be observed (1992:459-467).

with the spear motif groups are usually dating from the beginning of the time period under consideration or even from the marginal time period before that which has also been taken into consideration. They are generally well represented in the Syro-Palestinian area, and can be associated with gods provenant in this region, i.e., Ba'al, Reshef, or the Egyptianizing Ba'al Seth. The god of heaven iconography is normally represented by Neo-Assyrian glyptic with a variety of motif groups falling under this category. Iconographic sources displaying god of heaven attributes can roughly be dated between the 10th and 5th centuries B.C., whereas part of the evidence stems from sites outside Palestine, or sites without known provenance. Most of the motif groups are represented in the Syro-Palestinian area, at least with a small number of specimen.[9] However, some motif groups falling under this category, are not represented at all in Syro-Palestine (e.g., the water-providing god), while others experienced a wide distribution in this region (e.g., the winged sphinx motif group). The third category of images, i.e., the group displaying both attributes in a mixed form, centered around the depiction of the weather-god with the bundle of lightning in an aggressive posture. This image possibly epitomizes the thrust of the present discussion in the most impressive way, i.e., the god fighting from heaven in using meteorological weapons. The object of the god's aggression, when present in the depiction, was normally in the form of an equation between chaotic forces and human enemies. In cases where no antagonistic entity was present, the imagery at times appeared to be reduced to an emblematic or symbolic statement, designating a goddess or god as a certain type of deity (e.g., water-god, storm-god, etc.). Furthermore, the provisional character of these designations for the various gods was repeatedly noted. A deity in ANE iconography should be described according to its function and attributes, whereas the nomenclature is of relative importance.[10]

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[9] From the total number of iconographic objects collected for this study, about one third has been found on Syro-Palestinian sites with a verified archaeological background. Although one has to keep these limitations in mind with regard to far-reaching conclusions, it appears permissible to outline certain tendencies which could be established throughout the iconographic discussion. We normally endeavoured to include at least one representative of a respective motif group originating from a Syro-Palestinian site.

[10] Keel and Uehlinger rightly observe: "Namen geben über das Wesen der angesprochenen und verehrten Gottheiten meist nur sehr allgemeine oder gar keine Auskunft. Sie lassen sich wie Etiketten aufkleben. Die ägyptische Baumgöttin z.B., die auf Bildern der 18.-21. Dynastie neben dem Grab des oder der Verstorbenen zu sehen ist, trägt entweder keinen Namen, oder sie kann mit ganz verschiedenen Namen bezeichnet werden (Nut, Neith, Isis, Ma'at usw.) [sic] Ihre Erscheinungsweise und Funktion ist aber immer die gleiche. Die Identität einer Gottheit haftet nur zu einem kleinen Teil oder gar nicht an

(5) In comparing the biblical texts with the iconographic images, a number of parallels but also contrasts were established which have been summarized in the preceding chapter. On the whole it appears that the authors of the eight psalms discussed during this study, utilized imagery which was familiar to them from their general Syro-Palestinian environment, and which can be related to iconographic sources reflecting such imagery. However, one can by no means talk of a one-to-one relationship, establishing a simple line of dependency. There are distinct contrasts and variations of motif on such a scale that one is compelled to assume a certain adaptation of the iconographic material in accordance with the intentions of the respective psalmist. In interpreting such a state of affairs we would assume that the biblical author utilized imagery familiar to him from his Syro-Palestinian, viz., ANE general background, and applied them to Yahweh. During this process, a number of adaptations took place, and familiar iconographic motifs were filled with new contents as they appeared in literary form in the psalm. The motivation for such a practice would be the demonstration of a superiority of Yahweh over against the ANE pantheon (cf. especially Psa 68), a notion which is clearly monotheistic in orientation.[11] According to the authors of our selection of psalms, Yahweh takes on attributes familiar from other gods of the ANE, but he never does so in a static way, he is not restricted by them, and they do not become his emblems, designating him as the weather-god, as the war-god, or any other type of god *per se*. He rather fills them with a new or slightly differing content and goes beyond them, which serves to create the dichotomy between the one God and the many gods. Thus Yahweh always remains the *totaliter aliter*.

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ihrem Namen. Ihr Wesen kommt in ihren Funktionen und Rollen viel treffender zum Ausdruck" (1992:453f.; cf. also Keel, 1992b:91-95). One wonders if the evaluation of divine names for the God of the Bible should not be reconsidered along these lines.

[11] Touching on the current widely discussed question of Israelite monotheism, we would suggest that this tendency of re-utilization in the application of extra-biblical imagery in the psalms under discussion creates the polarized dichotomy between Yahweh and the gods which lies at the center of the comparative approach in biblical studies. Stolz observes: "Jedenfalls ist eine typische Vergleichsanlage hergestellt: Der Vergleich zwischen Israel und seiner Umwelt ist asymmetrisch. Was Israel auszeichnet, ist, letztlich jedenfalls, der Monotheismus; ebenso kennzeichnend für seine Umgebung ist der Polytheismus, wobei der letztere Ausdruck ja nur auf dem Hintergrund des ersteren zu verstehen ist: Die Vielheit der Götter wird erst auffällig als Hintergrund zu dem einen Gott..." (1994:39). Space prohibits an adequate discussion; for a comprehensive introduction into the present discussion, cf. the various articles in Dietrich and Klopfenstein (1994).

(6) Concluding a discussion on God as the warrior fighting from heaven, a number of questions have to remain open which may serve as incentive for future investigation:

First: Would the picture remain the same if one would broaden the research limitations and include more biblical texts and iconographic sources? Throughout the study, we attempted to keep the motivation for the selection of texts and images as transparent as possible, following what seemed to us the most rational way of proceeding. But a selection always remains susceptible to being a one-sided or few-sided representation of the actual complete picture.[12] How would the outcome of the project change, if one would include epigraphic material?[13]

Second: A significant part of the comparative material was found on cylinder seals both in and outside of Syro-Palestine, however, with a Neo-Assyrian background dating from the 9th to the 7th centuries B.C. Is it possible to draw any conclusions from that with regard to the dating of various psalms within the Hebrew psalter?

Third: God as the warrior fighting from heaven remains one of the less comfortable *Gottesbilder* regarded from a modern theological perspective. Nevertheless, it appears to constitute an important part of the imagery associated with Yahweh throughout the Hebrew psalter. Even more so, because it reappears in the literature of the New Testament as part of the apocalyptic vision given to John in Rev 19:11-15: 'Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty' (RSV). How can such imagery adequately be integrated into theological conceptions about God? - Perhaps in the way of the ultimate motivation which may be found at the core of the God of heaven and warrior metaphors as reflected in Psa 46:10f.: 'He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow,

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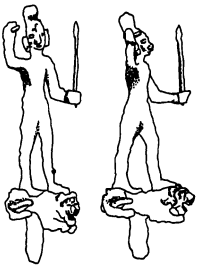
[12] Working with metaphors, however, one may not ever be able to create a complete picture. This also applies to the steadily increasing amount of iconographic images which may have been relevant for the present discussion.

[13] Cf. e.g., Lemaire's study of divine names in Syro-Palestinian inscriptions from 1000-500 B.C. (1994:127-158; cf. also Winter, 1983:682).

and shatters the spear, he burns the chariots with fire! Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!' (RSV).

APPENDIX:
CATALOGUE OF ICONOGRAPHIC OBJECTS

Below, the iconographic objects are presented in order of their occurrence in chapter 4. Since this appendix is intended to serve as a quick reference, the images have been scaled up or down, neglecting their actual proportions. Furthermore, the references for the line drawings are given.



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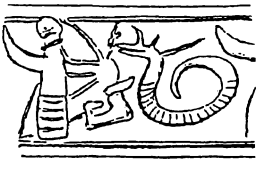

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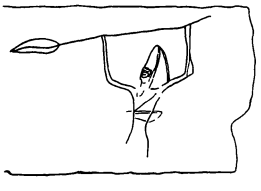

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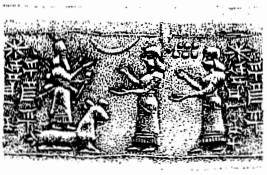

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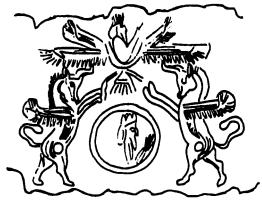

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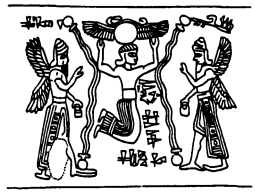

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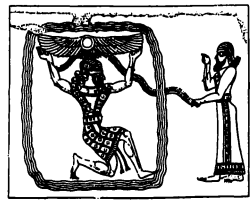

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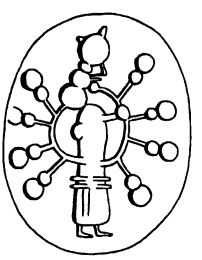

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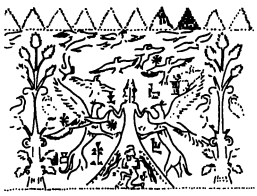

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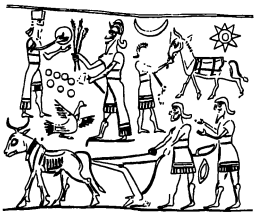

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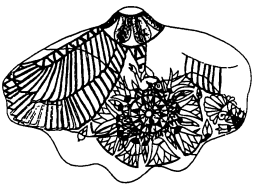

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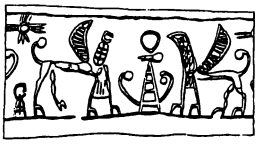

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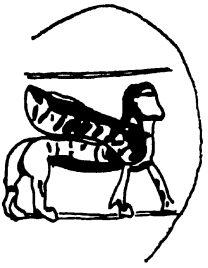

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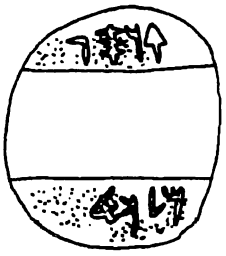

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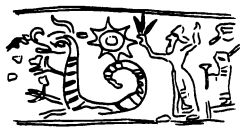

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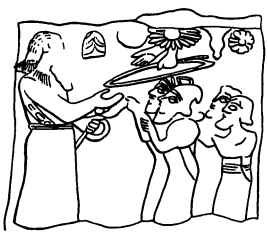

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Figure 5	NTK
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Figure 9	Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:fig. 367a
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[1] References marked with 'NTK' stand for line drawings made from the original photograph or photocopy by Naomi Thandi Klingbeil.

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Figure 51	Keel and Uehlinger, 1992:fig. 288c
Figure 52	Schroer, 1987:fig. 98
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Figure 57	Lankester Harding, 1953:pl. 6:6
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AB	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
ABD	F. N. Freedman (ed), 1992, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., New York & London & Toronto & Sydney & Auckland.
abs.	absolute
AET	Abhandlungen zur Evangelischen Theologie
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AJBA	*Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANETS	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
Arch	*Archaeology*
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
ATSDS	Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series
AulaOr	*Aula Orientalis*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BAH	Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BaM	*Baghdader Mitteilungen*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BeO	*Bibbia e oriente*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephermeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Ed. by K. Elliger *et al.*
Bib	*Biblica*
BIF	Biblisches Institut, Fribourg (Switzerland)
BiKi	*Bibel und Kirche*
BiTr	*Bible Translator*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRev	*Bible Review*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt
BurH	*Buried History*
BVC	*Bible et Vie Chrétienne*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
cs.	construct
DD	*Dor le Dor*
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary

EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 23: Theologie
EI	*Eretz Israel*
ETL	*Ephemerides Theologicae Louvanienses*
EvTh	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*The Expository Times*
fem.	feminine
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HBT	*Horizons in Bible Theology*
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary of the Holy Scriptures
Imm	*Immanuel*
imp.	imperative
impf.	imperfect
inf.	infinitive
Int	*Interpretation*
ISBE	Bromiley, G. W. (ed), 1979-88, *International Standard Bible Encycopedia*, 4 vols., Grand Rapids.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JdI	*Jahrbuch des (k.) deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSem	*Journal for Semitics*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament - Supplement Series
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament - Supplement Series
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LA	*Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Liber Annuus*
LumVie	*Lumière et Vie*
LXX	Septuagint
masc.	masculine
Miss	*Missiology*
ms(s)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
NE	Die Neue Echter Bibel
NGTT	*Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBO.SA	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archeologica

OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLP	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*
Or	*Orientalia*
OT	Old Testament
OTA	*Old Testament Abstracts*
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studiën
OTS	*Outestamentische studien*
PEFA	*Palestine Exploration Fund Annual*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
perf.	Perfect
Pers.	*Personalist*
pl.	plural
Qad	*Qadmoniot*
QD	Quaestiones Disputatae
QDAP	*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RevistB	*Revista Bíblica*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SB	Sources Bibliques
SBB	Stuttgarter Biblische Beiträge
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBLMS	SBL Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScEs	*Science et Esprit*
SEÅ	*Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*
sing.	singular
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
ST	*Studia Theologica*
Syr	*Syria*
TA	*Tel Aviv*
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBT	*The Bible Today*
ThLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
ThQ	*Theologische Quartalschrift*
ThViat	*Theologia viatorum*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TOTC	The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TR	*Theologische Rundschau*
TTZ	*Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift*
TWOT	Harris, R. L., Archer, G. L. & Waltke, B. K. (eds), 1980, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 2 vols., Chicago.
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UF	*Ugarit Forschungen*
vs(s).	verse(s)
VTS	Vetus Testamentum Supplement
WBC	World Bible Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

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SUBJECT INDEX

Summary

Based on a comprehensive survey of metaphors of God in the Hebrew psalter, a total number of 507 occurrences are identified in which God is described by means of a metaphor. Applying modern metaphor theory, these occurrences are classified according to their main metaphor, submetaphor, metaphor type, and metaphor category. It is shown, that a proportionally small number of 17 main metaphor groups with their respective submetaphors exist which describe Yahweh in mostly anthropomorphic categories. Focusing on the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, a group of eight psalms is selected which display a recurrence of the two metaphors: Psa 18, 21, 29, 46, 65, 68, 83, and 144. Each psalm is discussed according to its transmitted text, semantic peculiarities, and literary structures, followed by short comments on the passage. It appears that the authors of the psalms under consideration used imagery familiar to them from their Syro-Palestinian background, but adapted and shaped it accordingly to their literary intentions in the form of an *interpretatio Israelitica*. The notion of Yahweh fighting as a warrior from heaven on behalf of his people encompasses the spectrum of meaning for the God of heaven and warrior metaphors in the most comprehensive way.

In the iconographic part of the study, the visual sources are presented in three groups, i.e., depictions of gods or goddesses displaying warrior attributes, those with god of heaven attributes, and a group manifesting attributes which are reflective of both imageries. A total number of 93 images are presented of which approximately one-third come from Syro-Palestinian archaeological sites. It is noted that the more aggressive depictions of gods can generally be associated with earlier time periods and are well represented in Syro-Palestine. As the most prolific source for iconographic images reflecting the God of heaven and warrior metaphors, the Neo-Assyrian glyptic of the 9th–7th centuries can be established.

In comparing the two bodies of evidence, it appears that the biblical authors employed metaphors reflecting motifs from ANE iconography, although it is not possible to speak of a one-to-one relationship. Rather, the reutilization and adaptation of the imagery and its ascription to Yahweh demonstrates the tendency to indicate the superiority of Yahweh over the deities of the ANE in a strong monotheistic fashion.